HILDEBRAND AND CICELY

PAULL

THE QUEEN OF THE MAY.

HILDEBRAND AND CICELY;

OR,

The Monk of Tadystoke Abbaye.

BY

M. A. PAULL,

Author of

"THE FLOWER OF THE GRASSMARKET," "TIM'S TROUBLES," ETC.

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THE FRIAR'S SOLILOQUY.

CHAPTER I.

THE FRIAR'S SOLILOQUY.

APRIL 2nd, 1521.—How beautiful is God's world in this fair Devonshire valley! As I sat transcribing my missal this morning early, the blackbirds and thrushes, robins and linnets, were far busier than I with their ministry of song. God's preachers and teachers verily, ordained and blessed by the Highest Himself for the benefit and happiness of mankind.

I am well content, after the too dazzling glitter and too alluring pleasures of society from which I have been called to retire, that the decree of our Holy Father has made me an inmate of this spacious abbey beside the murmuring rocky river Tavy, surrounded by the simple pastoral folk, with whom I am quite sure I shall always be friendly. I am glad I am an Englishman and a Damnonian, for though I am not a prophet I

know full well that this dear old land has a promise of higher and nobler good than anything it has yet realized, and Damnonia * contains the fairest scenes of any region of it. Italy has sunnier skies, more cultivation, more education, more wealth; and Rome, is it not the very seat of learning and of religion—the holy of holies of these later times upon the earth? Glad indeed am I that I know Italy so well, and have lived in Rome; but no less glad am I that as a humble friar of our great order of St. Augustine, I came three years ago to transcribe and to illuminate my missals in peace in old Ordulph's abbey.

Ah! what a flash my gold paint gave then as the sunlight caught it; what glory and beauty exist in mere colour; what infinite pleasure I have experienced many a time in the rich carmine, and amber, and azure, and emerald hues with which I illuminate. I have rendered a devout thanksgiving upon bended knee for the tints of a sunset; for the lurid, terrible, dark beauty of the sky in a thunderstorm; while the rainbow always

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* Ancient name for Devon and Cornwall.

seems to me like streaks from the Creator's paint-brush on his cloud palette. The blue in the eyes of the cottage children who sport among the hedgerows, the glow of crimson on their healthy cheeks, the warm tints on their flaxen hair, all give me an intense pleasure which is amusing to my brother monks, and which they find it difficult to comprehend. They call me Hildebrand the Dreamer; be it so, my dreams, my tastes, are so full of sweetness and of joy to my own heart that I would not part with them for all the fabled riches of Aladdin.

Better, perchance, if I had been more of a dreamer hitherto, less of an actor in those hot days of passion and of strife, of temptation and of sin, that are numbered with the past.

It is strange to me, and somewhat perplexing, how much the humanities of life cling to me, even now that I have devoted myself to the solemn security of the cloister. I cannot forget that this is my birthday; that here, cut off from my fellows by sacred vows, with all the world shut out, I am thirty-one; in that prime and fulness of manhood when the duties and offices—I was going to add

the privileges—of life come thickly upon the shoulders of the men outside monastic walls. Nor can I forget my young mother, the pride and joy she told me she felt at my birth, her fading beauty in my earliest childhood, and all the sad accessories that so soon followed—death, and the grave. What part, what interest should a friar take in memories, even of a mother, of a home? I think I must be dreaming again!

What music the river makes underneath my small window as it flows on over its rocky bed from its far-off spring in the old Dartmoor tors. Would that the giant Earl Ordulph had made larger windows to his abbaye, or that after the fierce Danes levelled it to the ground they had made some improvement in this respect when they rebuilt it. Why not let all that is possible of sunshine and beauty enter and receive a welcome? When I have finished this, my missal, I will paint upon the refectory windows: they are unmistakably gloomy and dull at present—so for that matter is our abbaye church, and the parish church of St. Eustace too.

I am glad there is work for me here; I could

not bear to be an idle monk; nothing but one monotonous routine of prayers and meals and ceremonies, nothing of the toil of brain and hand that makes rest sweet and waking a delight. I fear me much, too, that were I to be idle, had I no employments congenial to my nature and habits, I might long unduly for that outside world in which men act in so many relationships, where they are husbands, fathers, masters, citizens, from all of which duties my black robe—nay, rather my solemn vows separate me.

April 4th, 1521.—I came this morning upon a treasure, yet quite by accident. While I was rummaging in an unoccupied cell that is partly filled with bundles of legal documents, some relating to our order and some to this particular abbaye, and partly with old church furniture, I found a strange old pile of manuscripts. They have been written by no unskilful pens. Some are legends of the abbaye, some are historical documents concerning the family of its founders. I have determined to transcribe them all in order, having obtained the sanction of our prior, and to furnish them with suggestive illuminations. The

earliest, which is the story of the Lady Elphreda, furnishes especially good subjects for my illustrations. Alas! poor womankind, how frail, how sad their history! The paper of these manuscripts is already brown with age, yet the caligraphy thereof is in a most clerkly hand. I shall gladly rescue the different stories from the further decay of time.

QUEEN ELPHREDA.

CHAPTER II.

QUEEN ELPHREDA.

[COPY OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.]

YE story of Queen Elphreda, daughter to Orgar, Duke of Devon, and sister to Ordulph the giant, both of Tavystoke, who were joint founders of ye said renowned Abbaye.

This ladye, even in her earliest youth, was a mayden of the most faire countenance, and easilie provoked the homage of mankind ; withal she had a ready tongue, a sharp witte, and a haughtie spirit, that accepted admiration as her simple due. Of a wholly differente spirit was her close companion and chiefe friende Ethel, her cousin, child to the dead sister of the Duchesse Winifried, mother of the prouder beautie. Yet were both these damozells wondrous faire and goodlie to look unto, with the bloom of the peach on their

soft-rounded cheeks, the heavens' own hue caught and held willing captive in their bright eyes; while for ripe red lips and sunnie haire the ladye Elphreda did merely exceed her fair cousine as one star may shine somewhat brighter than another on one of the frosty nights in winter. So it was more because of the shining and the sparkling than the beautie itselfe that the Duke's daughter was the most talked of. Beside, she was a duke's daughter, and the faire Ethel of somewhat meaner, though none the less ancient parentage.

Howbeit, the fame of Elphreda must needs reach the ears of the king (and kings and princes are ever greedy of beauteous women), who forthwith sent into these parts a trusty favourite of his, if any favourite may be deemed trusty in love matters, to spy the land and its inhabitants, and to bring him word again concerning its luscious fruits and tempting appetisers, which done, if the fruit were goodlie enough, and as faire as report said, he would speedilie follow thereafter, and pluck it for his own diversion and delight. This messenger, none other than an earle, and that of

East Anglia, named Ethelwold, being come to the palace of Duke Orgar, in this agreeable and convenient town of Tavystoke, did straightway present himself at the ducal court, wherein shone the resplendent lovelinesse of the faire Elphreda as its chief ornament and luminary, together with that, her lovely satellite, the gentler Ethel.

Now let us listen awhile to the discourse between these beauteous maydens, when, after some talk, and many glances, and divers gay festivities with the handsome earle, they seek their couch together for the night. With playful grace they shake adown their sunlit tresses, which, could earle or king but thus behold, they had been as golden nets to catch their easie hearts. Daintilie their little feet, white as the driven snow, speed when loosed from the prisons of their heavy shoon, o'er the fresh strewn rushes of their chamber floor, and meekly with reverend brow sweet Ethel kneels before the little shrine to offer up her prayers to the dear Lord Christ.

Elphreda pauses too, and kneels with a sly thought the while: "How faire I looke! My haire, like sunset cloud of gold, enwraps my form.

Surely e'en God himself must think me wondrous beautiful!"

And so her prayers, bestrewed with such rank, conscious pride, but do her harm, and Ethel is most blessed. Then, in each other's arms close laid, the maydens sink to rest, yet talk awhile much of Earle Ethelwold and the day's sports, and that great court of our great Saxon King Edgar the noble, from whose gaiety and joyes the earle is fresh arrived.

"Ah, Ethel, if I were but there," sighs Elphreda, "then would my beauty shine, then should I reach ambition's highest boon. I fain would be the wife of this great man, so should I bask in his exalted rank, and make the mightiest grateful for my smile.

"Sooner would I enrich some humbler home, wherein my presence was the brightest thing," rejoined faire Ethel; "be the gladness of a lonely heart, the light of saddened eyes, the joy of drooping spirits, the one golden coin in life's dark copper mint, the vibrating, sympathizing chord to some true heart in life's sad discord. To make home happy, my dear husband smile, and fold my babes

rejoicing in my armes, such be my happy lot! I ask no mighty rank, no power to reign in every courtly hall triumphant by my smiles, with power to break a heart by cold disdain or chilling glance. Elphreda, thy grand majestie of mien, thy rich and gorgeous beautie fit thee well for court or camp, for pageantry and pride. I have but fairnesse for a humble lot, and this do I desire. Proud Ethelwold already owns thy sway. I saw him blush and stammer like a boy when thou didst dart thy silvery witte at him, he could not soon recover, but cried 'Peace! Oh let me make my peace with thee, fair dame.'"

"Ah! was it so?" Elphreda smiling asked, well pleased to find her triumph sudden, swift as flight of summer bird upon the wing, and that the gentle Ethel marked it well.

And then she turned her on her easie bed, and sleep came down upon the two faire forms. With many-coloured dreams Elphreda slept, but Ethel's dream was of the one she loved.

So sped the days at old Duke Orgar's court, and Earle Ethelwold daily found himself the more enwrapped in his love unto the glorious mayden

Elphreda ; the while she to-day haughtie, to-morrow yielding, the next day wilful, and after that most winning, kept him in continual fret and fume, and yet he did but more and more determine with each new grace and each fresh torment to keep her for himself, and not acquaint his master with the magnitude of her charms. Yet could he not find heart to tear himself away from the proud beautie and her winsomenesse, and when she cut him with the keen edge of her saucie witte, or mocked at his love in her soft liquid voice, every note of which made music to his charmed ears, he wished that there were no king's courts in the world, and that he and Elphreda were the Adam and Eve of their own paradise. Howbeit dutie forbade the immediate indulgence of his hopes, though he so far prospered in his suit that e'er he left he ventured to advance his claims to the faire Elphreda, and beheld her somewhat moved by the strength and sinceritie of his passion—for what woman, even if her heart were no bigger than that of the bird that listens willingly to the love-song of her mate, can hear man's earnest love pleaded by his earnest lips without strange feelings of emotion ?

Truly, not the Saxon mayden of whom we write, for was not her strong vanitie satisfied even more than her weak heart, when she found the list of her attractions to flow so swiftly and smoothly from her lover's tongue. Nor was the duke of different mind unto his daughter. "Get but thy king's consent," said he to the earle, "unto this union, and thou wilt have my blessing."

Therewith Ethelwold sets out and comes unto the court of King Edgar with an assumed open countenance, and "What news?" quoth the king. "Hath the fame of her beautie surpassed that beautie itself?"

"In truth she is very faire; but nothing answerable to that which hath been told of her, and which your Majestie hath heard," said the Earle. "She is not fitted to be the equal of a king; yet would I, in order to raise my fortunes, seek thy grace to wed her mine own self, she and Duke Orgar being willing thereunto."

"Then must I seek further for my paragon of beautie?" said the gracious king with a smile; "take her and wed her if thou wilt, good Ethelwold."

With which permission, coming again to Tavystoke and to the ladye of his heart, the earle and Elphreda were wed, the marriage feast being solemnized with great rejoicings in the palace of Orgar, and the appointments of Elphreda and her cousin Ethel, who acted as her chosen friend, were much to be admired withal for gorgeousnesse and richnesse of costume and costlinesse of decoration, the bride herself being robed with rarest grace, and fragrant with sweet nards and spices, such as befitted a king's spouse rather than that of an earle. Her golden haire was powdered with diamonds, so that it seemed as if she carried a veritable sun upon her white and glistening shoulders · her head did so flash and dazzle the beholder's eyes. The snow of the pearl and the crimson of the ruby lay in close contrast in the necklace upon her breast; rich jewels, "glittering like stars," depended from her daintie ears, while her white robes gleamed like the garments of heaven in their beautie around her.

Earle Ethelwold, seeing her thus magnificent, could but own with trembling fear that she would have graced the crown she might have won and

worn. "Yet will she be the happier as my wife," quoth he unto himself, glad to excuse himself, even though he had wronged her future by his love.

Neare to the bride in simpler grace, like unto a flower beside a star, stood Ethel, the orphan mayden, with the sunlight on her golden haire, and smiles upon her coral lips, and one costly diamond glittering on her snowy bosom, new to her that day, and given by the one she thought of in her sleep. Behold the mysteries of love! Beside the far-famed wooing of Earle Ethelwold and glorious Elphreda, there sprung up within these palace walls a sweeter love-making, a truer joy, the which it behoves me to touch upon here, though I am minded to descant more at large upon the same at some future time. Giant Ordulph, the great duke's greater son, had heart so large it matched unto his body, which was of most prodigious size, and if I here relate his exploites, it will but convince the curious of his mightinesse, a thing famed not only throughout our Saxon Heptarchy, but throughout other and more distant lands.

He would stride in mere playful pastime acrosse the faire River Tamar, where it is full ten feet broad,

and by merely changing the position of his huge hands export, as if he were a bridge, vast numbers of people acrosse, at great convenience to them and no inconvenience to himself, being thus bridge, ferry, and merchantman in one. Here standing, he would also "cut off the heads of many little wild beastes, being brought unto him, and throw them into the water," sending these their heads seawards, while he preserved the fur of their soft coats for an excellent covering in winter.

Yet a more noticeable exploit is recorded of him, that being once travelling with that august and pious King Edward the Confessor, to whom he was of kin, and having arrived at the city of Exeter without any one to expect their coming, they found the gates shut and barred, and the porter absent; when this modern Samson, this Damnonian Hercules broke the bars in pieces with seeming ease, and then, "being warmed to the work," broke the hinges with a kick of his huge feet, and thus laid the gates open to afford passage to the king and himself. Whereat the king exclaimed jocularly, "'Twas done by the strength of

the devil, and not by the power of man." A speech scarcely welcome perchance to Earle Ordulph's ears, since he was more eminent for piety even than for strength, and his virtue and regard for religion kept equal pace with his monstrous measurements

A ROYAL TRAGEDY.

CHAPTER III.

A ROYAL TRAGEDY.

HERE have I somewhat wandered from my subject to speak of the brother insteade of the sister, and now also must I recount further the great love of this great man Ordulph for his faire cousin in her pure sweet beautie, a love that as it was far less notorious than that of Ethelwold and Elphreda, so was it also far more happy and more enduring. Ethel, though she felt herself so small a thing in comparison with Ordulph's greatnesse, and so meanlie beautiful in comparison with Elphreda's gorgeousnesse, was, as we shall seé, of sufficient lovelinesse to captivate this giant heart, and to subdue this loftie man to do her smallest bidding, nor could he feel himself happy save when he basked in the light of her smile.

The wedding of Earle Ethelwold and the beautiful Elphreda being solemnized in the parish

church of Tavystoke, which is dedicated to St. Eustace, and all matters being for the present amicable between the paire, the earle settles down with great alacritie in the palace of his father-in-law, desiring nothing more than to keep his prize at a safe distance from the court of his sovereign, and to treasure the bootie he has secured unto himself. The while she soon begins to fret herself somewhat, and to complaine unto her cousin Ethel that the world is no wider to her now than when she was but a daughter, not a wife, and that she deems a favourite should not separate himselfe so long from his master lest he lose his place. In truth, she desires nothing so much as to shine at court, and is in no way favourable to the seclusion in which her lord keepeth her.

About this time rumour reaches the king that he has been duped by his trustie earle, that the ladye Elphreda is more beautiful by far, even than he had before heard, and that there is not a ladye at court to be compared to the bride of Ethelwold. Not to be duped again, the king sets forth himselfe on his journey, and sends word to his favourite that, being in their neigh-

bourhood—namelie, at Exeter—he will delight himself with the sight of him, in his newlie-found happinesse, and have a day's sport with him and his father-in-law in their parks, or, still sooner, in the forest of Dartmoor, near adjoyninge.

Who shall paint the miserie of the unhappy earle, who, having hitherto deceived his master, now mistrusts only too surelie that he is being deceived in turn? He appeals to Elphreda, confesses all, and thereafter discovers that in no other quarter could he expect less aid. He with faire words and much adjuration of his love for her, speaks thus:—

"As the richest diamond, rough and uncut, yields neither sparkle nor esteem, and gold unburnished gives no better lustre than base brass, so beautie of feature clad in mean arraye is, or slightlie looked at, or wholly unregarded, so true is the adage of old that 'cloth is the man, and man the wretch.' To prevent, therefore, the thing I fear, and that is like to prove my present ruine and thy future shame, conceal thy great beautie from King Edgar's eye, and give him entertainment in thy gravest attire. Let thy matronly

robes, I pray thee, be as the nightlie curtaines drawn about our new nuptial bed, and the dailie clouds to hide thy splendent sun from his sharp and too piercing een, the rays whereof would soon set his waxen wings on fire, that readye are to melt at a far softer heat."

All which wise advice he made as he hoped the more powerful by tender embraces and fond kisses, and so left her to prepare himself to meet the king. She, being now alone, felt the burning passion of her vanitie to grow strong within her, and that love she had imagined she yielded to Earle Ethelwold, became changed forthwith into angry hate.

"Hath my beautie," she thought, "been courted by a king, and by the mouth of fame compared with that of Helen, and must it now be hid? Must I falsifye and belye Nature's bountie, mine own value, and all men's reports, only to save *his* credit who hath impaired mine, and selfishly belyed my worth. And must I needs defoul myself to be his only faire fool, that hath dispitefullie kept me from the seat and state of a queen? However he may answer it to the

king, his master, to me the injury is beyond repair, who thus hath bubbled me with a coronet insteade of a crown, and made me a subject who, ere this, should have been a sovereign. It can be no blame in me to make the most of Nature's largesses and Art's accomplishments, when I falsifye no trust, and only with the sun (to which the earle is pleased to liken me) show the beams, which, do what I can, will not be hid, nor at this time shall be, be the event what will."

So, calling for her cousin Ethel, she disposed herself as beauteouslie as on her marriage morn, awakening no surprise within that tender mayden's breast, who knew no reason wherefore Elphreda should not shine, and thought she did but rightlie desire to honour the king who had shown so many favours unto her husband.

Behold the ladye, therefore, ablaze in her rich violet velvet robe, with every gem that had heightened her beautie in the past, and an additional diamond or two from out her mother's casket to dazzle and sparkle the more in her king's eyes. Behold her in the hall of Duke Orgar's palace, the centre of the little group

that stands to welcome the advancing king on his return from the hunt, the fair whitenesse of her skin only less shining than the jewels that lie upon it, her sapphire eyes alight with exultant pride, her arched neck regal in its beautie; withal her snowy arms, her rippling golden hair, what wonder was it that King Edgar saw no other sight than this bride of Earle Ethelwold, and heard no other sound than the soft music of her voice, in which she bade him welcome? Kings are but mortal men.

Earle Ethelwold's handsome face reflected not the brightnesse of his young wife's; he saw the king's impassioned gaze; he saw the mantling blush upon Elphreda's cheek, and muttered to himself, "My doom is fixed." The old story in the Jewish scriptures has henceforth a new reading. There were another David, another Bathsheba, and another Uriah. With much craft the king, after his first pardonable outburst of admiration, skilfullie withdrew his open gaze from the ravishinge beautie of the ladye, while at the same time, he fed her vanitie by secret glances of love, and made her husband more and more

odious in her eyes. Another hunt was determined upon for the next day, and a party, amongst whom was the earle, attended the king to the Dartmoor forest.

"Now will we ride on together," quoth the king. "How faire a prize hast thou in thy beauteous wife, my earle! Thou hast trulie good right to love thy present habitation, since not e'en a king can triumph over thee in thy possession of so faire a dame."

Far through the great forest these two have ridden on alone.

"What sport to-day, Ethelwold?" quoth Edgar then. "Methinks thou art sad; do just behold those mightie trees above us, how they bend and bow, obedient to the autumn winds, hearest thou that moaning in the great tree tops, as if imprisoned spirits dwelt therein?"

"I do, my king."

"And now the birds shall hear another sound," quoth Edgar, running at the earle, his javelin pointed at his breast, his flashing eyes more full of scorn than Ethelwold had ever seen them before. "Deceiver, thou who darest to take to

wife a woman fitted only for a king," he cried, "and with loud lies to beg for my consent, that, had I known all, I never would have given. Thus, thus thou diest, and I take my rights."

"Great God, thus I die," exclaimed the earle solemnlie, too hastillie smitten to find remedy. "Thus I die, the victim of my wife's vanitie, alas! unshriven in my sins, and thou takest to thy bosom a ——"

He could say no more, but dropped upon the ground under the forest trees, and there was sudden riding to and fro, and the king, with loud wailings and lamentation, did deplore his own fate, who thus had lost a friend by cruel mischance, and at first only the great God who heareth the truth hidden behind all the false words of men, knew that a king spoke lies. But by-and-by, when Edgar so soon solaced himself and the faire widow of the earle, by his open love for her, men told themselves that he had slain his favourite with his own hand, to possess that of the beautiful Elphreda. She willinglie, because of that vaine, ambitious heart of hers, exchanged her father's palace at Tavystoke for

the king's court, and ruled her royal husband with an unsparing hand, eager to plot and contrive, and use her beautie to create her power; and a harsh stepmother ever to the young Prince Edward, son of her dead predecessor in the king's affections and throne. And to King Edgar and the Queen Elphreda were born two sons: one was named Edmund, and died in infancie almost before his mother had begun to plot for his advancement; the other, named Ethelred, for whose future his mother did risk the fate of her own soul in her ambition for his greatnesse. And the king did often recall the half-uttered words of his dying earle, and acknowledge unto himself that he had done amiss, to exchange the services of a faithful servant for the possession of a queen who, though she had the beautie of an angel, had likewise the pride of Lucifer himself, and studied the rather to acquire her own honour and renown than to make his peace. Nor is it to be expected that she should have a restful conscience, who had acted treacherouslie to her dead lord, and who had thereby lost much of the good opinion and hearty love of her faire cousin Ethel, who

had not hesitated to remonstrate sharplie with her upon the matter.

Howbeit, after some eight years of wedded life with Elphreda, the king died, not without much anxietie, as may be well believed in his last moments, respecting the future of his sons, too well knowing the temper of the queen to trust to any generositie on her part. To him succeeded of right, the young Edward, now thirteen years of age, eldest son of the dead Edgar, the which Elphreda could not endure, whilst her own child Ethelred was nothing more than a prince. "Why art not thou the king, my brave, bold boy, and I, thy mother, regent in thy youth?" Thus often in her heart Elphreda spake, the while she mused and planned, and planned and mused again, yet seeing nothing she could as yet do to hasten what her soul desired. But after three years had sped, she being at Corff Castle in the Isle of Purbeck, King Edward cometh near unto, hunting thereabouts; and he from love to his child-brother and respect unto his father's memory in the person of his widow, cometh hither to visit the queen and prince. Whom Elphreda receiveth with out-

stretched arms and faire words, and she being still young, still beautiful, and now above measure courteous, King Edward admireth more than had been his wont, and descending from his horse, held much pleasant converse with the paire, caressing Ethelred, and telling him when he was older grown, he should share his diversions in field and forest; should shoot his arrows, and throw his javelin; the boy, meanwhile, runneth hither and thither with eager face, and pretty readinesse to show his warlike toys. Yet all this time, under such faire seeming, the mother's heart grew black and blacker within her; all the evil things she had ever dreamed of in regard to young Edward crowded fast upon her brain. She saw in this friendlie visit but an occasion to advance her son, and found too easie a varlet ready to obey her wishes.

Things being thus hastilie prepared, she at the gate presenteth to her stepson the loving-cup at parting, with many kind and pleasant words and glances, fascinating by her faire beautie the eyes of the young king, as she had before time charmed the king his father. "None but herself should

offer that cup to her lord and master," quoth she, with a sweet smile, and stood before him, humblye, to receive back the golden goblet, after he had raised it to his lips, and drained it in her honour. Yet while he drank, a sudden pain seizes him, as well it might, the fruit of a hidden stab in his back, which wounded him mortallie; so letting fall the goblet, which dropped into Queen Elphreda's outstretched hand, he cries aloud, "Treacherie! treacherie!" and sets spurs to his noble charger, making all speed to get back to his companions in the hunt, who were at no great distance. But sudden loss of blood made his strength to fail, and so, falling from his seat, he frighted his good horse, and it dashed on with him through wood and brake, dragging his master, one of whose feet was but too firmly held in the stirrup; till making a circuit in his terror, he never stops till the dead, mangled, bruised, and bleeding body is laide outside Corff Gate.

Now are there well-feigned terror and surprise; swift riding forth of messengers to announce the king's death, weeping and lamentation within the castle; the queen regrets her step-son's untimelie

end with many tears, and bewails his youthful beautie and comelinesse as if she had done nothing to hasten their ruine, the while she makes great gifts unto her accomplices to shield her from the guilt of her vile deed.

So is Prince Ethelred through his mother's crime exalted unto the throne, but before he is to be crowned the truth cometh to be known, both by the whispers of her confidants and her own remorse, which, vain, ambitious, as she hath alreadye been, will not allow her to commit this act in peace. She sendeth in sore trouble and hot haste back to the old home in Tavystoke, where now liveth her giant brother Ordulph—their father, the Duke Orgar being dead—and his sweet ladye Ethel, together with their young and most fair progenie. And the queen willeth that Ethel may be sent unto her with all speĕd, having much and of great import to declare unto her. Therefore, Ethel setteth out, and arriving at Corff Castle, a great way from her own home and her pretty babes, findeth Elphreda in sore distresse, nor can she know peace until she hath fully opened her actions unto her cousin in all their

deformitie and hideous wickednesse; the which she does, now with haughtie, flushed face, and again with quivering lip and tearful eye, being distracted between her mind and her heart, and not at all ignorant of the enormitie of the crime which she had committed.

To whom Ethel: "Alas! my cousin, thou canst not make reparation for this dreadful deed to him who hath been the great sufferer therein; neither canst thou avoid the temporarie benefit that ariseth to thy son herebye; but alack! much I fear that he will have sore trouble in the crown that is thus earlie and wickedlie forced upon his young head: and that thou, his mother, hath, by thy rashnesse and crueltie, made life a heavie burden to the poor child, for whose advance thou hast risked thy soul's joy. Oh! my Elphreda, honour and glory are too dearlie bought, if we pay for them with our happinesse and peace of heart."

"But, tell me, Ethel, what I now must do."

"Dearest cousin, nothing remaineth for thee but to expiate thy grievous offence by sore penance: thou must put on the white robe, and

walk with the bare feet of the penitent around our Ladye's shrines; so shall thy poore soule be eased of some part of its burden, and thou wilt be preserved to the communion of thy Church.

This, which her cousin suggested, did her confessor insist upon.

And now, behold this beauteous woman, with the golden sunshine of her hair, hiding her face, which works with all the troubled thoughts within her breast; robed in the humblest garb that mortals wear, even the robes of penance; her jewels laid aside, her small feet bare. Hear the sad confessions of her lips, that she hath been guiltie of murder, and that against her king; and then profit withal, lest thou, too, however high thou art in pride and majestie, shouldest have to stoop so low through the unbridling of thy fierce passions.

And when this penance was accomplished, the coronation took place of the young Prince Ethelred, a child but twelve years of age, on whom his mother's guilt had laid so earlie the weight of a crown; when, as in the qualitie which his subjects did attach unto his name, he was still, in mind

and body, *unready* to receive it. And this crowning was held at Kingston-upon-Thames, a fair borough enough, where remaineth unto this day the coronation stone of these our Saxon monarchs, hedged in and defended from damage by divers iron palings. This ceremonie was performed by Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, though sorelie against his will, and he made unto the child king this very laudable and bold preachment, which partaketh of the nature of a prophecy, insomuch that so soon after it, the kingdom hath been devastated and overcome by both Danish and Norman folk. "Because," saith he, "thou hast aspired to the crown by the death of thy brother, whom thy mother hath murdered, therefore hear the word of the Lord: the sword shall not depart from thy house but shall furiouslie rage all the days of thy life; killing of thy seed, until such time as thy kingdom shall be given to a people whose customs and language the nation thou now governest knoweth not. Neither shall thy sin, the sin of thy mother, and sins of those men who were executors of her wicked designs, be expiated, but by a long and most severe vengeance." A

speech methinks, terrible enough to fright the poor boy, and to make him all the more likelie to hesitate in all his after deeds, so as to well earn that curious epithet, by which he hath been known ever since, and to which I have before referred, of "The Unready." Elphreda now busied herself, for she must be busied with somewhat, in building two monasteries; to wit, that of Amesbury and Wormel, in the counties of Wilts and Southampton; in which latter, she took up her abode, doing therein many acts of penance, hoping therebye to mitigate the judgment on her past sins; and calling upon God many times in the day to have mercy on her soul. Therein she died, and in the same lieth buried.

Here endeth ye true storie of ye Ladye Elphreda.

CICELY AND HER FLOWERS.

CHAPTER IV.

CICELY AND HER FLOWERS.

I DESIRE to recount in this my diary many of my present thoughts and meditations which may hereafter serve to remind me of my life at this stage, when action hath still much charm for me, and when the whole creation is full to me of unknown and mysterious phases I cannot as yet fathom, yet which I love to consider

I have set down the musty manuscript from which I have copied the story of the Lady Elphreda, upon the table of my cell, and pause to muse upon that beauteous woman and her fairer, sweeter, purer kinswoman Ethel. The old palace was at or very near to this same Tavystoke, where I dwell, and where then these maidens shone in all the brightness of their youthful beauty. It was quite near, perhaps, to where I now write this in the quiet peacefulness of our Abbey. There is something

strange in these connecting links which unity of place and scenery makes between us and those who have previously trod the same paths, seen the same sights, heard the same sounds so long ago. Those old trees beside the river into whose branches I love, boy-like, to climb and sit, while I think for hours on man's strange destiny and the mystery of life, and a thousand things I could not write of, even if I would—those old trees must have been saplings when these maidens walked beneath their shade, and told their secrets beside the murmuring plashing of the rocky river. All the centuries of time will be united in the other world to which we are hastening. Kindred hearts from out the ages when the world was young will meet with those who, though of yesterday, have perfect sympathy with them in thought and act. Perchance the desperadoes of our time will share in hell their discord with the ancient evil-doers of the world, and know a fierce anger that their evil deeds were thought of and performed long long before, that they have not even the merit of achieving novelty in their crimes.

Delighted surprise in heaven that good deeds

were done in all time and under all circumstances by the lovers of God, will, perhaps, have its counterpoise in the infernal regions, in disappointment that evil deeds of the very same black patterns were but again and again repeated. How poorly I express myself, how different my thoughts look, when written, to those dreamings and questionings in which I indulge myself among the tree-tops, and which are, to me, so eloquent of meaning.

How many choice subjects there are for my illuminations in this strange, sad story of Elphreda! What could please my brush, dipped in the rich and varied colours of the rainbow, more than the glowing hues of her splendid beauty as she welcomes King Edgar to her father's palace? What a sweet study for a calm hour lies in the pure womanly loveliness of Ethel! How my soft greys and pale blue tints will love to linger about her tender form! I could not surely have come upon a rarer, more delightful acquisition than these old manuscripts. I shall so enjoy to immortalize, as far as it lies in my poor power to do so, my countrymen and countrywomen who figure in this

story, natives with myself of this beautiful western part of our beautiful island.

This morning the sweet maiden Cicely came from the Abbey Farm with a most delightful nosegay of flowers to aid me in my illuminations. What a dear child she is! Of such I fancy were the meek maidens that loved to cluster round Christ's feet to learn of Him; there is so much teachableness in Cicely. If only our choristers and acolytes showed such ready willingness to learn! If it were seemly for a friar I think I would paint Cicely life-size and keep her in my cell: a young Saint Cecilia, at whose pure shrine my soul might be the better for worshipping. Already I have drawn a small copy of the youthful, innocent face, half-child, half-woman, in the pages of my missal; here it is, the likeness of my penitent, my pupil, whom I have watched with interest ever since I came to the old abbey. The growth of all things is marvellously interesting. The indescribable accumulation of life all around us in everything, almost oppresses me sometimes; the world that exists in one field; every blade of grass a minute continent with its inhabitants;

every drop of water a miniature ocean with its living creatures. The study of mere growth of body is wonderfully fascinating, but to watch the development of mind is a nobler science yet. To mark with joy the aspirations after good in the young heart, to find intelligence dawning and spreading like the sunlight on the waking world in early morning hours, this is my delight. If I could not be an artist, I would have been a teacher. I have had many pleasant hours cultivating the intelligence of Cicely; her face is a pleasant study for a lover of art—the fair, smooth, rounded brow, the dove-like trustful eyes, violet in hue as those of the fair flowers I gathered yesterday in the hedges of the river meadow; the playful, smiling mouth, the saucy nose, the pretty neck, the well-turned head; all these are thy belongings, Cicely, and will justly bring thee admiration. How much I like to note the pretty young girl's wonder, her awestruck gaze, her pure astonishment and surprise, when she finds there is so much she does not yet know. She is not clownish, not open-mouthed, as are so many of these poor rustics who live round about us.

Ah! Cicely, my child, as thou walkest further on thy road of life, further from childhood, nearer to life's end, how will this strange surprise of thine increase and spread until thou hast to wonder—oh! so often, that at last I fear thou wilt grow tired, and cease to wonder any more. I fear that, like so many others who started full of new and glorious delight at every fresh beauty in the great creation of God, thou too wilt grow careless about the pencil-marks of His hand on the tiny floweret or the sea-washed shell; thou too wilt forget to listen when He speaks to thee in the varied notes of the wild birds, and wilt scarcely care if larks or sparrows fill the choir.

It is one of the greatest misfortunes that can happen to any of us—by whatever chance our senses may become blunted—when the exquisite variations of colour and tint and shape and sound cease to be of moment to us. Then we grovel, instead of walking as God meant us to walk upon His beautiful world, erect, and with our eyes lifted up unto His heavens. Sensuality, pride, indifference, each of these sins takes the golden wealth of our being from us.

I would not willingly find fault with my brethren, but yet I cannot help knowing that amongst these pious men, a thousand and more in number, there is really very little living unto God in the fullest, happiest, brightest, highest sense. We monks, who shut out the common passions of humanity from the heart, the home life and home loves that are so truly sanctifying to many natures, do not therefore necessarily become pure ; but, alas ! very often give only the more place to the gluttony, the avarice, the pride, the superstitions that are abhorrent to our Master, Christ. Must it be ever so? Cannot a body of men, separated from that wild whirl of life that so nearly engulfs many of us in the first strong moments of manhood, and specially consecrated to God, show forth the ideal of what devotion should be? Must our religion be so mixed up with our grosser natures that though we set ourselves apart to its cultivation we are no better than our neighbours who live in the midst of the world, sharing its cares, its joys, its sorrows? Something must be very wrong in us that these things should be so.

Even our hermit who lives across the river, and

who receives every week his portion of dry bread from our abbey, and only supplements this homely fare by a few wild roots and berries—a very model of abstinence—dishonours God, as I conceive, by hiding as it were under a napkin unused that gift of eloquence with which God has endowed him, and which made him once so popular and zealous a preacher; as also by the filthy apparel in which he is content to exist. For do what I will I cannot understand that religion lurks in soiled garments, or has any fellowship with dirt. The purity that is an attribute of the Divine nature, requires a corresponding purity in God's children. When I think of the incongruousness of a dirty angel, and also of the supplication, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," I am weary and sick at heart as I recollect that Friar Paolo is termed holy in his unclean robes, unwashed face, unshaven and matted beard.

THE MAY QUEEN.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAY QUEEN.

APRIL 10th, 1522. — How swiftly Old Father Time swings his sickle and turns his hour-glass even in this quiet Devonshire valley, even within these monastic walls. The year has not been an unhappy one. I have not, truly, made so much progress as I thought to have done ere now with my old manuscripts and my illustrations of them, but I have striven to make each picture a real work of art, the embodiment alike of the joint powers of my brain and hand. I have shown each sketch, almost each separate figure or countenance, as I conceived them, and as I have progressed in my work, to Cicely. Her simple praise is very sweet to me. I can but think of her just now, for she has told me to-day that she is to be the May Queen this year, a grand honour to which my gentle favourite looks forward

with extreme delight. I shall do well to inform her as to the proper manner of her costume, the flowers that should form her crown, the songs that should be sung in her praise. This choice, which might easily spoil a vainer maiden, will do Cicely good. How fair the hawthorn snow will look mingled with the golden brown of her thick tresses; and the tint of the graceful bluebell is not more deep than those sweet eyes of hers. Let me think awhile. Yes, I will have it so; Cicely's crown shall be of my weaving. How can these simple cottage girls know as well as I how to place the varied hues of their flowers so as to obtain the fairest combinations and the richest colouring? Besides, the child is my own in the high and spiritual sense of fatherhood; have I not administered to her her first communion? Do I not hear her innocent confessions, as, with blushing face and downcast eyes, she reveals those trifling errors in her daily walk, which, sweet soul, she calls sin? Dear Cicely, may thy heart ever be as pure as it is now, when the sunlight of God's love irradiates its seventeen years of life, and shows to thee every speck so plainly

that it seems a hideous flaw! Would that I—would that any of the thousand monks in this abbey—were as guileless as thou art. How I loiter at my tasks when the thought of thy sweet face comes between me and my missals, or my pictures! Cicely, how is this? How is it too that thy dancing curls and glowing cheeks and laughing eyes visit me in my dreams, and I wake so much too soon, to turn and toss restlessly on my pillow, and wish I could but dream again? I am a coward when I think of thee, Cicely; even here in the still silence of my cell—here, with only the conscious presence of God and my own soul, I dare not ask myself what it all means, this fierce striving and battling within me whenever I think of thee, Cicely; and alas! when do I not think of thee? The great world grows small to me. There are but two places in it, Cicely: where thou art, and where I am, and I am near thee. There are but two dwellers on it: thyself, myself; and I realize a golden day of joy. Then suddenly, with but a single turn of thought, the world expands: it is full of people; the thousand friars, with our abbot at their head, stare at

me angrily, and gather round me to hide thee from my sight; the clouds cover the dark sky; night, cold night, creeps over my awestruck soul. Cicely, perchance thou wouldest only smile, and never understand my sore distress. I will no longer dream thus. Idleness is God's enemy, man's tempter, Satan's decoy bird!

April 23rd.—Even since last I wrote in this diary of mine less than two weeks ago, I have learnt to read my own heart too correctly not to feel that I walk on the edge of a precipice, and that I shall need all my strength of will—above all, much of the grace of God—not to stumble and fall just exactly where others have fallen. I will not write the sweet name upon this page which thrills my heart even to repeat it: rather will I pray that, however strong within me may rise the tide of passion—however plainly I may be made to feel that, though I am a monk, I have not ceased to be a man; yet that I may never bring one moment's sorrow upon the heart that is now so unsuspecting, so joyous; never mar the blue sky of her fair fresh morning of life with the faintest, smallest cloud. The happy spring and

flow of joy I might have known but for my vows, must be dammed back under this black robe, and stemmed with this rough girdle. Yet I will keep to my resolve to make her May-day crown. That resolution I made a few days ago, before I asked myself solemnly what my strange feelings meant, and before I answered honestly, frankly to my soul, and to my God, that I loved the sweet child too well—alas! how far too well—for my soul's peace. How long ago that confession of my heart seems! There has been such a great gulf fixed between me and my darling since then. Heaven and earth are against me if I break my vows. I dare not incur this load of guilt, yet to me the guilt seems so much greater still were I to dare, even in thought, to mar her innocence and my own. Surely the devil must find food for rejoicing even in this Abbaye of Tavystoke, and amongst the pious disciples of St. Augustine! For instance, when——

Hildebrand! I start forward at the voice of conscience, appalled at my own bitterness and hardness of spirit. Dear Lord! I am not safe one moment, if I begin to judge my fellows

instead of myself, "for with what measure I mete, it shall be measured to me again." There are, after all, better things than the realization of earthly joys, however fascinating. Be it mine to seek the highest good.

May-day. Evening. 1522.—This has been such a very happy day to me—a day so full of God's sunshine and the smiles of little children, and flowers, and innocent mirth—that my soul was enabled to lay aside its troubled battlings with the flesh and grow peaceful in the joys of others till I could myself rejoice as heartily as they. Miserable indeed must be the heart that does not brighten at the sweet sights and sounds of nature—the sights and sounds the great All-Father, as we delight to call Him, provides for His children.

It was like an old pastoral, fuller of music than some pastorals are, the whole day: an Arcadian picture with scarcely less of innocence and joy. I made my May-day crown for Cicely last evening on the floor here in my cell, with baskets full of flowers before me, from which to choose what eye and hand next wanted; and, as I twined the

flowers, I sang softly to myself snatches of old songs that I had heard in Italy from dark-eyed serenaders in gondolas under balconies; pure little bits of tender sentiment, and sweet outpourings of fond passion. I was not wise, perhaps, to sing love-songs, knowing what I know of myself, but they seemed so to harmonize with the breath of the flowerets and the throbbings of mine own heart as the wreath grew between my fingers; and I threw in here a violet, there a celandine, here a nodding bluebell, there a tress of the golden-haired laburnum. There was place too for the crimson-petalled daisy and the fragrant lilac flowers, while the hawthorn made the silver setting for each flower jewel. The crown alone could not content me; I made also a sceptre for Cicely's little hand to wield, and spent quite a long time in choosing the flowers that should be privileged to form the posy for her bosom; and I made it at last of daisies and heartsease and forget-me-nots, with a sprig of may. And when I had done I made a long chain of flowers to deck her throne, and then I opened my inkhorn and set to work to write a song for her, and I

took the words of a text that had been sounding in my ears all day, for my title:

REJOICE EVERMORE!

When the bright tender green of gentle spring
Decks the sweet woods and lanes with vesture choice,
And joyous birds their gladdest anthems sing,
Rejoice!

When the fair flowers each hill and mead adorn,
And in clear air the cuckoo's cheerful voice
Fills us with rapture every sunny morn,
Rejoice!

I added the following words in rhyme for Cicely to speak to her friends:—

Your May-day queen this golden sunny day
Welcomes you to her court—advance, I pray;
Behold my crown, my sceptre, made of flowers,
And spend with me the happy May-day hours.

Early this morning I awoke. All through my dreams, Cicely, clad in her white festive robes, and wreathed with the garlands I had twined, had danced before me, and when I would have caught her in my arms, and clasped her to my heart, she had vanished suddenly, to appear again and again before my dazzled eyes, but always at a distance from me. I was not the only monk

who mingled in the laughing throng that wandered through the lanes to bring home the maypole. The tree had been cut down the day before, and six of the oxen from the Abbey farm of Tiddey-brook were sent to bring it home, with a goodly accompaniment of servants, together with Cicely and her father, and a dozen or two of her brothers and sisters and nephews and nieces. Cicely was in a white robe already, though it was of simple texture, and not, as I well knew, the robe of state which she would wear as queen. She smiled when she saw me, and ran up to me eagerly, with a flush on her sweet face, to know if her crown were ready for her use.

"Quite ready, my fair child," said I, softly patting her fair cheek.

"What thinkest thou, Friar Hildebrand," said she, "we have been up so brave and early this morning, that it seems already many hours ago since I awoke; and what dost thou think we have been doing?"

"I should like very much for thee to tell me, Cicely," I said, watching the laughing eyes, and the merry dimples of the sweet mouth.

"Canst thou not guess secrets, Friar Hildebrand?" quoth she, archly, while a great pang shot through my heart, to be assuaged by her next words. "Dost thou not know what maidens do the very first thing on May-day morning? Does not my skin look fairer than is wont?" And then she blushed and hung her pretty head, the woman in her ashamed of the child's questions.

I smiled and said, "Thou art always so very fair, Cicely, that I cannot see the difference."

"Silly little one, why dost thou trouble Friar Hildebrand with thy prattle?" said her father, coming up to us and interrupting our talk, much to my discomfiture. "Dost thou not know he is a grave, learned man, and that such folk have better things in their heads than thou canst put there?" and he pinched her small ear, as I thought, a little too roughly.

"Cicely was telling me of something I did not know before," I answered, detaining her till her father had passed on. "What hast thou been doing this morning to thy blushing face, my child?"

"We—oh, such a number of us!" said Cicely, "have been bathing our faces in the May dew.

It was such fun to put our faces down in the grass, and splash the sparkling drops up into our cheeks with our hands; and they say 'twill make us look beautiful, dear friar, and women ought to try to look pretty, ought they not?"

She put her little hand into mine with such a frank, childish sweetness as she spoke, that I said to myself, "If thou wert not a monk, Hildebrand, thou mightest set thyself to win this dear child's young, innocent, affectionate heart, and I think thou wouldst succeed;" but, being a monk, I said gently, as I always speak to Cicely, "Yes, my sweet maiden, all things ought to look as pretty as the great good God intended them to be. But thou must not believe too readily in silly fancies. The May dew makes maidens more beautiful, only because it is good to get up early, and go into the open air at dawn, and wash plentifully in pure water, not because the dew on the blades of grass on May-day is healthier than on any other day, or than the spring water at the farm. But it is such a good thing to get quite close to nature in one of her sweetest, quietest moments, when all her thousand beauties

awake after the gentle rest of night, that I should advise thee to try the May-dew bath for thy bright face every morning."

Cicely laughed so gaily, so joyously, and said to me, "Come along, dear Friar Hildebrand; we must come quickly, or we shall not see them harness the oxen to the great tree," and we hastened forward. There were such a crowd and so much laughter before us in the wood that the birds were almost too much frightened to sing; but the thrushes and blackbirds could not resist a few explanatory notes to each other, doubtless on the subject of our business there; and in the distance we saw the cuckoo flying, and presently heard his clear, sweet voice upon the sunny morning air. Then the oxen were ready to start, and the procession was formed, boughs and bunches of hawthorn were gathered by everybody, and even each one of the grave oxen was decorated with flowers, while many of the girls and children seated themselves upon the maypole to ride back thereon to the town. The pole is always, and has been, I suppose, for centuries, raised in one of our abbaye meadows that borders

the river, but at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the abbaye wall; so on we come through the goodly town, gathering fresh additions to our number at every step, for they who have been somewhat slow to get up even on this bright May-day morning are astir by this time, and come to their doors to see the procession pass, which is enlivened by strains from various Pan-pipes, and whistles made of sycamore, and horns of many sizes, with here and there a more ambitious flute, and a fiddle or two, that make the feet of the young folk to move in sympathy. Also by figures in various quaint devices, some in skins of beasts, others inside wooden frames, like in shape to horses and dogs, which make the air resound with their quaint and shrill cries. For myself, I, Friar Hildebrand, would be well content to listen to the sweeter strains of bird and beast, as God makes them; but our good folk like to be amused, and if the amusement is neither cruel nor vicious it becomes even a friar to laugh with the rest, rather than to mumble angry denunciations, and frown and look cross.

At length the patient oxen stand still, obedient

to the word of their leader, and now the maypole is reared on high, with flags and flowers waving from its summit, amidst the shouts and cries and songs of the whole vast assemblage, amongst which are fully one-half of our monks, who have come out after matins to participate somewhat in the fun and glory of the day, whereat Cicely, to whom I had kept near, all the morning, said to me, in her droll way: "Dear Friar Hildebrand how alike the monk's dress makes you all look to the rooks that fly about over the fields, alighting hither and thither amongst the flowers, and then flying away to some fresh spot."

I gave her little hand a tight squeeze for her mischievous playfulness, and answered her in the same tone, "So be it, Cicely, for the rooks are a good, plain, sensible sort of birds, to which I am not unwilling to be likened; sooner far would I be an honest black rook, who minds his own business and does his work bravely, than a gay, conceited parrot, who chatters a good deal more than is seemly."

Whereat Cicely laughed heartily, and said, "Am I the parrot, dear Friar Hildebrand?"

"No, nor wilt thou ever be, I trust," I said abruptly, for I found myself unskilful in discourse with the dear child, because of those strong feelings of mine that I had to hide from her. Just at this time, and while I was thinking of the various origins of these May-day customs, Cicely was beckoned to from the other side of the meadows by her sister, and presently her little nephew, Edwy, was come to fetch her.

"'Tis time thou got ready to be queen, Aunt Cicely," he said; and then I thought of my wreath, my sceptre, and posy and song, and went to the cool dimness of my cell to fetch them. Thence I proceeded to the house of Cicely's married sister, where the queen was to be robed, and escorted her unto the meadow, where a throne and footstool of wood had been erected by the young men, cushioned with crimson velvet, and carpeted with flowers; and as the dear child advanced in her pure white robes, and my posy on her breast, I gave the crown and sceptre into the hands of those who had been appointed to proclaim her queen of the May, and wished I could myself have attained that coveted honour.

There was a burst of hearty admiration as the flower wreath crowned the head of clustering curls, and at that sound the eyes flashed for an instant almost proudly, the posy rose and fell upon her breast, her sweet lips trembled, a deep crimson blush spread over neck and cheek and forehead, and the flowery sceptre shook nervously in the little hand. Ah, Cicely, what a proud moment it was for thee, my child, and how many eyes besides mine rested on thee with admiration! Then the bells of the Abbaye church rang out sweetly, tenderly, and floated upon every quivering sunbeam into the very midst of the happy crowd, whereat the young May-queen and her maids of honour, flower-wreathed like herself, left the throne in the sunny meadow, and, followed by a long train, entered St. Mary's shrine, now beautifully adorned with flowers, where the sunshine, streaming through the painted windows, fell in rich patches of coloured light upon the white robes of the maidens. There all knelt in meek devotion, while soft music breathed and echoed forth the benedictions of the priests. Nor was there aught but what was most fair and sweet

in this pause in the innocent merry-making, to remember Him through whom the whole joy of the world came to us.

Out again into the sunshine and on the green sward of the river meadow to the dancing round the maypole, and all the mirth and music that young glad hearts make for themselves when the year is, like them, just bursting into its summer tide. And the queen entertains her guests at a sumptuous feast of syllabubs and junkets covered with the famous and unequalled cream of this western county, and gives away the queen-cakes she has made, with no unsparing hand. And there is playing of lady's slipper and blindman's-buff, and many another game as full of mirth; and a little too much drinking of ale and cider from long horns and huge tankards, as is evident by the unsteady steps and unseemly drowsiness of not a few, specially of the older men. What a pity that even on a May-day holiday sin must push in his ugly face amongst the formerly innocent revellers. Ah! truly the world so pleasant, so flowery, so fair, would be heaven itself without sin; as one part of it was once

Paradise till the serpent entered it. But to most of us I do believe this golden May-day was a worthy interpretation of what it was meant to be by Him who gave it to us, a pause in life to welcome the flowers and the birds and the sunshine.

So, looking back through the hours that are now over, that have glided so softly from the present into the past, with only a murmuring sweetness to mark their onward flow, I feel happy and thankful for the joys I have known through them, and the music of the vesper hymn fitly closes a day that has been so full of peace.

When I parted just now from Cicely and her friends as they went back to the Abbey farm, her violet eyes looked up into mine so trustfully, and her sweet voice said, "Good-night, dear Friar Hildebrand; thou hast done so much to make me happy to-day, and I do love thee for all thy kindness, and especially for my beautiful crown, and above all, I think, for my song."

And she went away warbling forth the last verse, while all the youngsters around her caught up the final word, "Rejoice!" and shouted it

gaily with her in a chorus of sweet sound, when the turn in the road hid her from my view. And now the pale soft beauty of the moonlight floods my chamber and lights up the Madonna and Child, in Parian marble, upon my altar, which His Holiness, Pope Leo X., gave to me as a parting gift ere I left Rome.

"YE HISTORY OF YE GIANT ORDULPH, WITH MANY AND MINUTE PARTICULARS OF YE FOUNDING OF YE ABBAYE OF TAVYSTOKE."

CHAPTER VI.

"YE HISTORY OF YE GIANT ORDULPH, WITH MANY AND MINUTE PARTICULARS OF YE FOUNDING OF YE ABBAYE OF TAVYSTOKE."

THE next of the old manuscripts in order of time has an especial reference to the founding of this our Abbey. I had hitherto believed that Duke Orgar, Ordulph's father, had had a hand in its foundation, but can find no notice of his share of the work throughout these embrowned pages. Perchance, like David of old, he did but prepare the means which Ordulph—a second Solomon—should use.

Thus it reads:—

Ordulph, the giant Duke of Tavystoke, riseth one night from his bed, as his manner was, to perform his devotions, being a man of most devout and pious heart, and goeth outside of his palace, as from his youth he had accustomed

himself, to worship in the stillnesse of night, and under the canopie of heaven. Here, when even the bird hath forgotten, through sleep, to sing his hymn of praise, and the very flowers have closed their little eyes, the which, in daylight, they love to cast heavenward, this great man lifteth up his hands to God, and beseecheth the blessing of the Most High. Then did there appeare unto him a most wondrous sight, no less a marvelle than that of a golden glorie, which extendeth from the heavens to the earth, which he can compare to nothing so much as to a mightie sunbeam or pathway of light; and that, shining through the pitchy darknesse of the night, affrighteth him more than it pleaseth him, as may well be, he not knowing its occasion, nor whether it shineth in wrath or in mercie. So swiftlie he departeth, with his mighty strides, into his own house again, and reacheth his chamber speedilie, where, without waking his faire dame, the Duchesse Ethel, he doth weepe piteouslie, making his couch to be wet with his tears, until that sleep overcometh his eyelids. But his sleep is not to be without meaning, for behold, in a vision, he seeth one of

a most faire and lovelie countenance, who standeth beside him, and thus speaketh unto him:

"Be not afraid, oh! thou beloved of God! but know for certaintie that thy prayers will be heard of Him, of which thou hast demonstration in that splendid light so latelie shown unto thee. Rise, therefore, very earlie this morning, and diligentlie inquire out the place where thou sawest that pillar of light and glory, and there, as a sign of sanctitie, thou shalt find four rods fixed at equal corners. In that place thou shalt rise an oratoire, so large as those rods denote, to the honour of the four evangelists, who have, as on a four-wheeled chariot, carried the Gospel of Christ through the four quarters of the world; and in so doing thou shalt obtain the pardon of thy sins."

Having listened unto the music of the voice of this celestial visitant, Ordulph ariseth again from his bed, devoutlie repeateth his prayers, and returning to his couch, gentlie awakeneth Ethel, to whom he longeth to recount the marvellous incidents of that glorious light, and of his dream close following upon it.

To whom Ordulph thus: "My beloved wife

now would I acquaint thee with some strange matters."

Whereat the ladye giveth a slight start. "Hath it aught to do with thy visions upon thy bed, my dear lord?" quoth she.

"Wherefore inquirest thou, my Ethel?"

"Because," saith she, "I too have a wondrous dream to tell thee of, when thou art done."

"Thou shalt speak first, my Ethel," saith Duke Ordulph.

"Nay, nay, my dear lord, let it be mine to listen: a wife's duty is first to listen, then to speak."

"Not when her lord would have it otherwise," saith the duke, planting a kiss playfullie on her sweet lips. "Let that unseal them, and let thy dear voice utter what thou hast seen."

"Know then, my Ordulph, that an angel hath stood beside me this night, bright as a star and glorious as the sun; a beauteous creature, clad as it were in robes of moonlight, with a coronet of stars around his shining locks, and in accents gentle, yet commanding, he hath informed me that Duke Ordulph, my dear husband, hath to build

an oratoire to the four evangelists, the place whereon hath been showed unto him, and that I am to forward the good work with all my might."

"This, sweetheart, is what I have to tell thee," quoth Ordulph; and he recounteth unto her the full particulars of the light, and the dream that followeth it. Whereupon they talk together for a long while upon the goodnesse of God, and His marvellous ways to the children of men, after which they sweetlie fall asleep. And, behold, unto each appeareth again the same dream, the same bright angel standeth beside each; but he doth not repeat the same words, but saith earnestlie, "Why do ye delay to obey my orders? Have ye never heard that obedience is better than sacrifice? Rise, therefore, seek and do as is commanded," with more to the same purpose. Again the duke and his ladye sink into the arms of sleep. Whereupon for a third time the angel cometh to each, and now no longer do they dare to hesitate, being persuaded that it is an angel of God. So rising together, the giant duke taketh his faire wife with him, and seeketh in the woods adjoyning to the palace for that very spot where

at night the glory had appeared unto him, and whither, lest he should err, the angel mercifullie conducted him. Then, falling upon their knees, they return thanks to God for the honour He had conferred in manifesting His will to His servant, and for sending His angel unto him and unto the dear partner of his life

Now soon there springeth up a fine oratoire in that place, being commenced the very same day, and for that Ordulph would obey, and even go beyond obedience in this wondrous matter, he maketh it to exceed by a good space the limits given by the angel. After which, at the western part thereof, he formed the Abbaye of Tavystoke, which he richly endowed with eight manors, his ladye likewise enriching it, now and afterwards, with other twelve, in which abbaye was abundance of room for over one thousand monks. This abbaye Ordulph dedicated unto St. Mary; and over the monks, to direct and inspect their manners, he appointed an abbot. King Ethelred, son of the guiltie Elphreda, and nephew to Duke Ordulph, being, as we have alreadye seen, set upon the English throne, did confirm, in this

matter of the Abbaye of Tavystoke, all the wishes and workes of his pious uncle, and, besides granting unto it many not before mentioned privileges, did make it free from all worldlie services, save and except "rata expeditione, pontis arcisve restauratione" (established military expenses, with the repairing of bridges or arches). In this charter of the King Ethelred, which was witnessed and consented to by no less personages than Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Oswald, Archbishop of York, together with ten other bishops, besides divers great dukes and others, occurreth this sentence: "If any, seduced with the madness of covetousnesse, shall presume to infringe this munificence, let him be driven from the Communion of Christ's Church, and from any participation of the body and blood of the Son of God; let him stand at last with the traitor Judas at the left hand, and, unless he repents and makes satisfaction, let the vile apostate never be forgiven either in this life or in that to come; but let him be thrust down with Ananias and Sapphira to the bottom of hell, where let him be tormented for ever." And this said charter beareth the date 981.

Ordulphus, having thus eased his soul, and given a great and worthilie munificent gift unto his countrymen, proceedeth to take care likewise for the welfare of his sweet ladye and their goodlie offspring; and herein, as in all previous matters, he showeth himself both bountifull and wise. Nor was he less praiseworthie for an abundance of hospitalitie both to rich and poor and strangers, and for making his pleasant domain a meeting-place for many and various people, who delighted in its beautie and in the kindlinesse of its inmates. But while this great and good and noble man was still in the full and midday glorie of his manhood; Death, wrapped in his gloomie mantle, cometh on apace to meet him, and neither the love of wife and children, nor the wishes of many friends, could stay his departure, he being so abundantlie prepared for translation to a higher sphere. Then might be heard the cries and lamentations of the whole inhabitants of Tavy-stoke, and deep sighs and groans from the monks within the abbaye walls, to whom Duke Ordulph had been rather a friend than a mere patron, and even the little children of the farms and cottages

shed abundance of tears, that their dear great duke was dead, having found his heart as large to their wishes and hopes as his body was mightie and magnificent to their eyes.

And it becometh me to tell of what a noble, genial countenance he was; a very Samson in mightie build and strength, but no whit like unto an Israelite in countenance, being of a fair skin, with a most ruddy glow on either cheek, a pair of bright blue eyes, a russet beard, with hair of a somewhat darker shade, a finelie chiselled profile, and a mien as courteous as kindlie, and as frank as dignified; add unto these a most merrie laugh and a loud ringing voice, and you have before you the picture of the best beloved giant that hath ever trod our English soil.

When death came unto the fair palace of the good duke to strike down its mainstay and support, there was more sorrow within the heart of the sweet duchesse than we have words to show, yet did her tender heart and hands comfort him through every wearie hour of his illnesse, and her faithful bosom support his dying head. And after the holy abbot had administered to him the

absolution and the sacrament for the last time, and chanted vespers with other two monks in his chamber, they left him to the care of Ethel, who never quitted his pallet day nor night, nor gave him up to any stranger hands, being marvellouslie supported herein; till sleep seemed purposelie to cease for a season from her eyelids, that she might fulfil her pious dutie. To whom, in the twilight of that summer's day, which seemed so like unto the decline of his summertide of life, he thus spake, "My dear life, eternitie seems before me like unto a golden, sun-illumined ocean, into which, a river at its fullest and broadest, I shall presentlie flow, so gentlie, so happillie, that there is only room for the one regret, that I cannot take thee along with me. Ethel, if this be dying, it is an easy thing to die." Then he pointeth to the bowls of sweet lavender and luscious honeysuckle, gathered that morning from the plot of garden ground, and from the ducal woods by his own boys and girls, wherewith to adorn their father's chamber and to minister to his pleasure, for he ever loved flowers. "The fragrance of these summer blossoms," saith he, "will be merged for me into that

land, wherein all is sweetnesse and joy and love." The one hand of his wife was laid tenderlie upon his forehead, while her other arm encircled his neck as his head lay on her breast; he turned his blue eyes fondlie upon her—"Thy love, my Ethel, thy goodnesse, thy charitie, have been like the music of silver bells in my ears, calling me to all things holie and pure and right."

"Not so, my husband," she answereth tenderlie; "the rather have thy pietie and devotion won me to seriousnesse and attention to my most solemn duties, and to Divine things."

"Then have we helped each other, sweet," quoth he, and gazeth tenderlie at the flowers again.

Then troopeth into the chamber his children for their father's good-night blessing—three heartie boys and as many tender girls, all eager for his kiss and caresse, who had impersonated to them on earth the All-Bountiful Father in Heaven, in that he had never wearied to bestow goodlie gifts upon them, and the richest treasures of his affection. So when they be all gone, save the eldest boy, never doubting in their innocent hearts that they would see their father alive upon the morrow,

he calleth the youth unto him, and exhorteth him thus: "Frithiof, I commit unto thy tenderest care this dear ladye, thy mother, and I advise thee to look well unto thy own heart, that all thy brothers and sisters may see somewhat in thee, the which they may properlie and naturallie reverence. For there be nothing in the mere fact that thou wert born before them, to make them love and honour thee, save thou doest also such good deeds and speaketh such kind words as shall win their love. Be thou, therefore, speciallie afraid to make thy greater age a warrant for tyrannie or oppression of thy younger brethren and thy sweet sisters, and show thyself as willing to take good advice from them as thou art readie to give it to them. Frithiof, my son, thou wilt soon be the Duke of this fair and pleasant town of Tavystoke; these smiling domains beside the lovelie river, which have gladdened my eyes since boyhood, descend unto thee. See to it, my son, that thou makest good use of thy wealth, while I go to inherit a better countrie."

Then there cometh a strange pallor over his face, and a sweat brake out on his forehead, the

which Ethel with her soft kerchief wipeth away, and presseth her warm lips upon his cold flesh. Once more he turneth his blue eyes upon her full of love, and then he gentlie and slowlie murmureth, "Ethel, my own fond wife!" and took her hand, and held it to his lips.

The sunlight had altogether faded from out the room; it was fast growing dim. Frithiof knelt by his father's couch, and held his hand between his firm young grasp. There was a long silence, whilst Duke Ordulph lay motionlesse, his eyes shut. Once more he opened them: "Frithiof," saith he, "remember there is nothing for a Christian to fear in death."

"Oh! father," sobbed the youth, "if I could onlie be sure of dying as thou diest."

"Nothing to fear, my Ethel," repeated the dying man, turning his head a little, the better to gaze at her.

"Nothing, dear heart," she saith softlie, her whole soul in her answering look of love. Thereupon he giveth a faint sigh, as peaceful as that of a sleeping child upon his mother's bosom, and the great soul departed. They buried him in a

huge sarcophagus, made expressly for his giant clay, in the churchyard of the abbaye church of St. Mary and Renan at Tavystoke, wherein were also laid, many years after, the mortal remains of his well-beloved wife, the faire Duchess Ethel. But, without doubt, his most precious monument is to be found in the faire proportions of the mightie abbaye of which he was the generous founder.

Here endeth ye true history of Duke Ordulphus and ye Abbaye of Tavystoke.

MISGIVINGS.

7

CHAPTER VII.

MISGIVINGS.

MAY 30th, 1522.—I have read over my copy of this old manuscript with much interest; the Giant rises before me as I read, the great, good, genial-hearted man of whom the little children had no awe, because his kindliness matched so well his immense stature. Surely my pencil may well love to linger amongst the warm, ruddy hues of his great beard and his flowing locks, through and in which tiny child hands nestled and strayed, fearing nothing, because of the Christlike nature of the mighty man, strong as tender, and, better still, tender as strong. So will I draw him, amongst the village children on the green, with half a dozen of the smallest and fairest clustering on his knees and shoulders. How much I do admire and reverence and love thee, oh! thou dear and honoured founder of this my beloved

abbaye; and as I pass thy tomb, or gaze upon it from those windows of our abbot's palace, which are exactly opposite the church and churchyard, I seem to have known thee as well—ay, and better far than I know many of my brother monks. There is no separation between us, spite of difference of rank and fortune and size and strength, when my heart beats, as it does now, in such close unison with thine; and I thank thee that thou on earth livedst so true, so fair, so pure a life. Again the thought crosses my puzzled brain that those lives which have been devoted to home loves, which have echoed God's fatherhood in their own homes and to their own children, seem to have in them the most of what is Divine. Yet is it not natural to suppose that if we give up all our affections to God, surrendering them upon the altar of devotion and dedication, we should be freer to worship Him fully to offer to Him our time and every other talent with which He has endowed us? But do any of us give up all to God because we profess to live the lives of religious men? Is there more of sanctity, less of selfishness, in this old abbaye

than in the mansion, the farmhouse, and the cottage? I blush to own that there is some impurity amongst us; much, very much, of gluttony and excess in wine; above all, a vast deal of cold indifference to others. This immorality that is known, although it is not openly noticed; these orgies that we excuse as our only allowed means of enjoyment; this coldness, this uncharitableness; are these the natural outcomes of such a community as ours? and if so, had we not better be dissolved and take our parts in life, so that we may have at least some important occupations for our time? I write all these strong words in no bitterness or censoriousness of spirit.

I am sorely perplexed and troubled. Monastic life is not what I expected. Shall I dare write the words? It does not satisfy my soul as I believed it would have done. Yet why should I complain? Are not my own foolish fancies, my own wild dreams, my ever restless spirit, the very things which prevent its satisfying me, and help also to prevent its perfection?

If a monastery such as this is ever to be a pure assemblage of pure souls bent on nothing so much

as on worshipping God, this must come to pass by every individual monk striving to become pure as in the sight of God; striving to faithfully fulfil his vows; striving to cast out from his nature all that makes the monastic life unbearable to him. I think, without risk of being contradicted by any one, should any one besides myself ever read these words of mine, I may divide our little colony of men into three portions. First, those who are really white in soul, and who live so simply near to God, that though they may see less of His sunshine than some others, are yet very soberly and very sweetly *at peace.* Part of these, like the saints who have already crossed the Jordan, that river of death, have "come out of great tribulation"; their trials have been the stepping-stones by which they have crossed over to quietude and trust. Others of this first class are men of small minds, few aspirations, few temptations, and they have set the whole of their limited intellect and affections into one groove. These latter are mostly austere, but they are well satisfied.

The second class of monks have become monks less by any inclination and self-denial and self-

dedication, than by the mere force of circumstances. It is almost necessary in these days that some one member of a family, especially if the family be large, should embrace a monastic life. These have small thought of being mere "religious men." Their aim is at once to keep from flagrant scandal, and at the same time to enjoy as much as possible the pleasures of men who are outside the walls of a monastery. Good cheer, good wine, games of chance, the chase, and in very many instances the attractions of female beauty, are all either publicly or privately indulged in; and though they are censured by the truer and more devout members of our order, this class finds so much sanction in many abbeys and cloisters from those who are in authority over us, as to make our "jolly friars" very careless of blame.

Of the third class I avow myself a member. We are men with yearnings for the higher, more sanctified life of our spiritual brethren, yet who cannot, do what we will, isolate ourselves from this great throbbing, pulsing world of men and animals, and trees and flowers, which is outside of us as monks, and which we yet feel to be the creation

of God, as we ourselves are, and not outside of Him. We cannot be quiescent in our higher degree of holiness, as the first class of our monks is, for we question whether we possess any higher degree of holiness than other men, spite of our gowns and girdles and crosses and shaven crowns. We cannot either carelessly become worldly monks, such as the second class, for we dare not forget our vows of temperance, chastity, celibacy, and devotion. It must have been easier, methinks, to be a monk in the old Crusading days than now, for there was hard fighting to be done, a stern manly life to be lived, and furious battling to redeem from the hands of infidels the Holy Sepulchre, once the resting-place of our crucified Lord, and therefore dear to Christians for ever more.

And yet, oh! yet, were not even the infidels, whose blood Templar and Crusader and Knight of St. John poured out so carelessly, just as dear to the Divine Son of God, who died for all men, as that one piece of ground wherein His body rested for a few brief hours from out the countless days of His eternal life.

It is very certain that I must work rather than think. Thought becomes so intense, so multiform, so complicated, even at times so oppressive, that my brain refuses even to rest at night, and I turn wearily hither and thither on my sleepless couch, puzzling myself with metaphysical problems that I try in vain to answer. I will cling at least to some great sublime truths which shine like stars through the murky gloom of this my mental cloudland.

God is good.

God cannot change.

God cannot err.

The world is God's workmanship, and is in the hands of this good, unchanging, unerring God.

I am part of created nature: therefore I too am in this Divine keeping. My prayer is an echo of the Psalmist's, "Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of Thy wings."

It is a strange thing that, with all my imperfections, all my difficulty to express myself even to my penitents, I am a favourite confessor, and especially with the young. Young men bring me vexed questions of thought or action to decide

upon as if I were their judge instead of their priest, and insist upon my decision. Young women blushingly own to me the tender emotions of their hearts, and tell me of their fluttering aspirations heavenward, which the good Lord sends into their innocent souls. I cannot refuse to hear confessions; it would be churlish, and might cut me off from a means of usefulness to my fellows; but I wish they would choose an older and a wiser man.

Confession must be right; it is a cherished ordinance of our Holy Church, but it is an awful thing to me to have men and women come to me as to God, and open the secrets of their lives and unveil their most hidden thoughts. I frankly admit I seldom obtain much relief myself from my own attendance at the confessional. I cannot reveal myself fully to any man; for what man, even what priest, would have patience to listen to all my strange, incoherent thoughts and semi-thoughts, desires, and pantings and ideas, and doubts and misgivings that really make up the daily life of this poor trembling heart and brain?

Can any one but its Maker possess the key to

unlock the hidden mysterious yearnings and instincts of my being, scarce suspected by myself yet which cause me constant perplexity? Can any one, save the Master Musician, swell the harmonies and cure the discords that run through my daily life? If I cannot myself confess to another *my* whole self, what right have I to expect others to confess themselves without reserve to me? What is wrong in this matter? Who is wrong?

I dare not probe, as many confessors declare it is our duty to probe, the sensitive, guileless hearts of the young, lest I should inadvertently suggest to them sins of which, without suggestion, they may never be guilty. I can only invite them to trust me with any difficulties in life or in morals which occur to them in their daily experience, that we may talk over the matter together as father and child, and ask the counsel of God thereon.

Father and child! Ay, and if the young have wise, holy parents, capable of giving them instruction, who so suitable as a father or a mother to listen to the doubts and faults and perplexities of their children? This thought leads me

straightway to another — is not God the All Father? Christ the Universal Brother? Does not the Almighty know as none else can? Is not His ear the true confessional of a world?

"Hildebrand, thou art beside thyself."

Yes, that is what half at least of our community would say, did they listen to my full confession. I think it is very true that I can do myself no good by pursuing these meditations. I will rest my brain on these subjects by bringing my palette and my brushes, and sketching our noble giant founder, Ordulph. I have been dreaming too much and too long to-day.

"YE STORY OF YE PRIEST AND YE CLOISTER, TOGETHER WITH SOME PARTICULARS RESPECTING YE DESTRUCTION OF YE ABBAYE OF TAVYSTOKE BY YE DANES IN YE YEAR 997."

CHAPTER VIII.

"YE STORY OF YE PRIEST AND YE CLOISTER, TOGETHER WITH SOME PARTICULARS RESPECTING YE DESTRUCTION OF YE ABBAYE OF TAVYSTOKE BY YE DANES IN YE YEAR 997."

I SEEK, in the arrangement of my treasured old manuscripts, from which I have tenderly and reverently removed the cobwebs and dust of years which had accumulated upon them, to copy them in rightful order as to time, thereby the better to instruct myself and those who shall read them after me. And the next relates to an important event indeed, the burning of our abbey by the ferocious Danes. But for very close reasons this manuscript has had a wondrous, almost a weird, effect upon me. Thus it reads :—

In this year 997, as in years before and after, did those scourges of ye sea, viz., ye

Northmen or Danes, as they are variouslie stiled, grievouslie infest and devastate our fair Englande. In ye autumn of ye said yeare, being prowling about, with a fleet of vessels, containing not less than two thousand of armed men, in ye south-western parts of England, they did perceive that commodious and safe haven of Tamerwoerth, where into the river Tamer emptieth itself, and whereby is situated ye town of Sutton,* divided into two parts—Sutton Prior and Sutton Vaultort—the one part belonging unto ye Lord Vaultort, ye other unto Plympton Priory. These Danes, being minded to commit ruine and waste in some quarter, no matter where, so long as it promiseth plunder, steer straightway up that commodious river, having heard that there lieth somewhere thereabouts ye rich and goodlie abbaye of Tavystoke, not finished much more than thirty years before, by ye pious Duke Ordulphus. And because there was nothing sweeter to these monsters' lips than bloode and gold, and they knew that monks were peaceable folk, and abbayes wealthy, they

* Modern Plymouth.

took no small pains to discover ye exact direction in ye which they must march. After that they had landed at a place thereafter called Danes' Coombe, ye river ceaseth to afford them passage, as if unwilling to conduct a foe to so much goodlie buildings, and so many kindlie natures. Being come almost suddenlie,—without above half-an-hour's warning, and that from a poor serf, who had espied them as he was busy ploughing,—upon this poor defenceless little colony of black monks, these latter set themselves to work vigorouslie to hide ye gold and silver of their altar plate, together with ye most costlie and valuable of their belongings, and to arrange for their safe flight as speedilie as possible. But all too soon, and before half was done, ye enemy was upon them, awing and terrifying by their ferocious countenances and terrible weapons as well ye serfs of ye Duke Frithiof as those of ye abbaye, and paralysing every arm that should have been raised in defence of these holy men. With one part of their number do ye Northmen surround ye abbaye walls, and guard themselves from unexpected attack, and cut off escape,

while ye rest hasten through ye cells of ye monks, and to ye Church of St. Mary, and ye Abbot's Palace. Nor do they forget to make inroads upon ye cellars and Still House, which abutteth ye river, wherein they do most readilie and greedilie drain and devour as well ye strong spirits as ye milder cyder and ale and mead which are therein a-brewing. So, being come out again, they are ye more prepared than before, being now drunk, to commit horrible enormities and extravagancies, which they cease not to doe, with fierce calls ye while upon their false gods to aid them.

And all this time there is a strange passage of human nature being enacted within one of ye cells, whereunto as yet they have not penetrated, but where ye sound of ye mischief they work is plainlie to be heard. And in this cell there are two occupants; ye one, a monk, habited in ye black gown and coarse girdle, with ye iron cross and rosary of his order upon his breast, and ye other a boy, one of ye chorister boys of ye said abbaye. Upon ye face of ye man there is a sad and penitent look, as of one that

repenteth him of some dire sin, while ye innocent child looketh up at him with an unfeigned surprise; and soe are they both very faire to look upon, each being of a goodlie countenance; and now that we do regard them attentively, we behold both to be of ye same faire skin, ye same bright coloured blue eyes, and ye same flaxen hair, while neither in outline of brow nor chin can one detect any other difference, save that ye man's are harder, and more settled and stern, than ye child's. And there is a great and terrible yearning in his eyes and wistful look upon his brow, and as he bendeth down unto ye boy who standeth at his knee, he trieth and trieth, but as it seemeth in vain, to speak. There are louder noises in the distance, shouts and wild laughter from ye fierce Danes, and helplesse cries from ye monks; and in a passion, as it would appear, of remorse and agony, ye monk now lifteth ye boy from ye ground and straineth him wildlie to his heart, ye while he waileth piteouslie, with great teares rolling down his face, and his chest heaving with suppressed emotion.

"Oh! my son, my son, would to God I could

die for thee, my son, my son!" So doth he repeat ye plaintive words of ye prophet King David, in as sore distresse.

Ye boy looketh wistfullie in his turn upon ye friar's face, and layeth his young head quite trustfullie upon ye shoulder of ye Augustinian, and speaketh ye pretty innocent words of cheer, with which a child oft-times comforteth, in sore trouble, those who belong unto him. But at every affectionate caress of ye little one ye monk trembleth ye more. Then there is some silence betwixt them, and ye sounds of ye dread visitants to ye abbaye grow sharper to their ears.

"Arthur," saith ye monk, in a dry, hard voice, so strangelie at variance with ye tendernesse of his eyes, and ye kisses he showers upon ye boy's wondering face, "Arthur, listen to me!"

"I am listening, Friar Ethelbert," saith ye boy.

There were still louder noises without, and ye child hid his face upon ye monk's shoulder, while Ethelbert held him in a tighter embrace.

"Ye fierce Northmen come nearer to us, Arthur. Death may be close at hand. I dare

not die with my sin unconfessed to thee, and I pine, perhaps foolishlie—but God only knows how I pine—to hear, if but for once, from thy dear lips ye name which belongs to me. Arthur, thou hast never before known thy father. I will tell thee now what thou askedst me but yesterday, and I refused thee. Arthur, do not hate me —do not hate the monk who makes confession to thee—child as thou art—of his broken vows and his unsubdued passions. Love me, love me still, Arthur, for thou art indeed my son."

And that Divine instinct of tendernesse, ye which God hath implanted between parent and child, which only unnatural harshnesse and violence can ever extinguish, led ye boy Arthur to comfort and draw himself yet closer unto ye arms of his father, whose white, sad face bespoke ye sinceritie of his repentance.

"And I have begotten thee, my son, to such a cruel fate as this. O God! surelie now hast Thou punished me for my weaknesse, my sin. How often, O Lord, I have wondered at ye tendernesse of Thy mercy, when month after month, yeare after yeare, ye child was spared

unto me, and grew up beside me, loving, and gentle, and fond, coming dailie from his cottage home, and his sweet mother's care to learn ye things of time and of eternitie at his unknown father's knee; and singing Thy praises dailie with a voice so full of delicacie and beautie, that I felt a pride in him as my son, that was, alas! but a new form of sin. But now it all ends—oh, my God! *how* it ends: ye gentle mother, whom I wronged, left to a sad, perhaps a terrible fate in her lonely cottage, and ye boy we both of us loved, to be smitten, cursed, perhaps wholly withered, perhaps carried off a prey, a spoil, to ye cruel Northmen's home; while I, ye cause of all ye misery, can at ye worst only die, and cannot—Oh, God! Thou wilt not permit me to—prevent ye consequences of my sin. "Surely"—and here ye strong man writhed in his agony—"surely this is a punishment greater than I can bear! Arthur, Arthur! what thinkest thou? Speak to me, dearest child, if it be but to curse me that I am thy father."

The face of Friar Ethelbert was working terribly, his weary soul looked out from his

haggard eyes, his wan lips trembled with ye conflict within, his cheeks were ashen pale, and drops of perspiration stood thick upon his forehead. But for answer to these, his passionate words, ye little chorister only twined his child arms ye more closelie round ye monk's neck, and whispered softlie; "Dear father, thou must not speak so, thou dost frighten me; I love thee dearlie, and that thou very well knowest, and thou hast been always so very good to me."

Like ye soft summer shower unto ye thirsty ground falleth these sweet words upon ye ears of Ethelbert; ye agonised look passeth from his face; ye faintest smile cometh back to his pale lips; he gazeth tenderlie into his child's eyes, and catcheth something of ye peace reflected therein from his innocent heart.

"God ever bless thee, my son, Christ and His dear mother have mercy on thee, and may all ye saints protect thee!" saith he in broken accents. But there was no time for more, a rushing sound of many heavy feet along ye corridor without, and then a fierce blow from a battle-axe upon ye door of ye cell, and in

there poured, jabbering in their unknown tongue, and blustering in ye pride of conquest, a score and more of ye fierce Northmen, their faces all flushed with strong drink, their long golden locks waving upon their shoulders, their eyes blue as ye steel of their weapons, gleaming fiercely. Whereat Arthur fasteneth himself close-lie into his father's arms, and trembleth like ye autumn leaf when ye storm is loud and it must soon fall. But Ethelbert half springeth to his feet, and clappeth his hand unto his side in-voluntarilie, as if at one time he had been used to find a sword there not unreadie for use. Then he remembereth his helplessnesse, and sinketh down again with a groane, and only placeth his boy somewhat behind him, ye better to defend him from assault. Then cometh forwarde one of ye Northmen, and speaketh in ye English tongue. "Hast thou any treasures here in thy cell, oh monk?" To which Ethelbert replieth calmlie, "None, save this boy, whose innocent life I pray you to spare, he being not an inmate of this unhappy abbaye, but belonging unto ye town of Tavystoke adjoyning."

"Now do I verilie believe, for all thou art a monk, and therefore, not allowed to possess such belongings," exclaimeth ye Northman coarselie, "that ye boy is thine own son"; and he flasheth his keen eyes quicklie from ye one to ye other, and with a loud laugh uttereth somewhat to his companions in their own tongue. At which ye face of ye friar grew crimson, and then ye flush died suddenlie away and left him pale as before, as ye passion with which he resenteth ye insult giveth way to his true penitence of heart.

"Come along with us," saith ye Northman, and Ethelbert keepeth firm hold of Arthur, and prepareth to follow. And now, what sights and sounds afflict him, and what a ghastlie appearance hath ye once fair abbaye! here are dying monks lying groaning upon ye ground; here are ye dead still seated in their chaires, stabbed fatally by ye cruel knives of ye marauders. It is truly more like unto a battle-field than aught besides, but a battle-field in a house; and curiously there mingleth with ye dead and dying ye broken crucifixes, ye scattered rosaries, ye dishonoured Host, ye torn vestures of ye priests, on all of

which sacrilegious hands have done their worst, ye while battered furniture and various pewter pots and mugs lie about in ye greatest disorder upon ye rushes that bestrew ye floor.

"Alas! alas! how are we stripped and wasted," quoth ye friar unto his son; "how hath ye glory of this our fair abbaye departed!"

But even while he spake, a worse misfortune befalleth them, for as they lingered, ye North-men have advanced and left them behind, in order ye better to discuss ye ruine of ye house, while they perfect their own safetie. And now, thick and fast cometh upon them, and around them, ye lurid glare of a fire brightening ye twilight which had begun to fall upon ye earth, and presentlie to brighten it still more for many miles around, as ye chief buildings of ye abbaye, reared with so much paines by pious Ordulph, give way to ye brutal designs of ye Danes.

"Let us fly, Arthur, let us fly," saith Ethelbert, in a voice of horror, as ye flames shot past ye windows, and they sped hastily from one vast room to another, and from cell to cell, pausing only at ye terrified cries of ye dying, to hand

ye drop of cold water, or to cheer in ye moments of ye last agony with ye whispered benediction of ye church.

They come at last, this father and this son, to a small and secret door which opened into a covered way that leadeth to ye Abbot's garden; and here Friar Ethelbert pauseth, and embraceth his young son: "Go thy ways, my beloved," saith he, "seek thy gentle mother, and bear to her my last blessing, and my last prayer for her forgiveness. Tell her while life is left to me, ere ye fierce flames seize my trembling limbs, old memories are sweet to me, and that I bear her, my Eleanor, and thou, my Arthur, on my heart before God. Leave me, dear child, leave me; oh! stay not, sweet son, else will thy sorrowing mother have nought to comfort her. For me, I must go back unto my brethren, happy if I die while I strive somewhat to expiate ye past by handing ye cup of cold water to ye disciples of my forgiving Lord."

And so he turneth, and refuseth to be held by ye constraining arms of ye loving child, who but for that great affection he bore unto his mother,

would fain return with him, whom he had but so latelie learned to call "Father." Now, Ethelbert, ye separation over, and therefore ye bitternesse of death past, pursueth his way with calm step and unruffled brow, and dieth, as ye Northman himself afterwards testifieth, ye death of a hero, while he nurseth ye wounded monks amongst ye burning abbaye. Arthur, who escapeth, though his fair mother doth not, ye ravages of these foes unto God and man, entereth ye service of Duke Frithiof, and hath himself, being now a man of mature years, related unto me this touching history which I do here and at this time recorde.

Signed, Humfry. Dated ye ninth day of ye month of June, in ye yeare of our Lord's incarnation, 1042, being ye second yeare of ye King Edward ye Confessor.

CICELY'S SECRET.

CHAPTER IX

CICELY'S SECRET.

AUGUST 20th, 1522.—We are now come to the full glory of our harvest moon, and the work amongst the golden corn proceeds with great diligence. It is long since I have made an entry in this diary. I have finished and illuminated, much to the satisfaction of my brother monks, the old manuscripts I have already transcribed Happily several more remain to engage my attention. I say "happily," for my heart has been so tossed and overwhelmed with the billows of my unsubdued passion for the sweet maiden Cicely, that the summer glories in which I have hitherto delighted have rather mocked than comforted me.

The latest copied, and to me, as it seemed, most touching story of the monk and the youthful chorister, still strangely moves me. I have drawn a picture of the boy beside his father's knee in

the Friar Ethelbert's cell; and another, of their pausing amidst the ruins to comfort the dying; and a third, of the parting at the entrance to the Abbot's garden, when the boy looked back at his father and saw him advancing as firmly to his death as ever a British soldier since marched to victory at Cressy or Poictiers. To the Abbot's garden! To that selfsame spot I have more than once taken Cicely, in order that I might show to her admiring eyes the rich red roses from Damascus, which the Crusaders brought to increase our floral treasures, the soft velvety beauty of whose bloom, and the rich lusciousness of whose fragrance no other rose can surpass. From this rose is it whence is distilled the oleaginous and costly Eastern perfume entitled attar of roses; and of its petals in those far-off sunny lands, as divers pilgrims have informed me, is made a confection or preserve delicious to the palate.

And then my hand trembled; I laid brush and palette and paper upon my easel, and threw myself upon my knees, and wept bitterer tears than I had ever shed before. The great lesson of

Friar Ethelbert's life was before me, and I felt that, act as I would, whether I conquered my love or was conquered by it, I must bear henceforth the responsibility of having learnt it, and thereby, if I failed to profit by it, add unto my own condemnation. I determined to shun Cicely, though her sweet presence was the sunshine to my drooping heart; to shut myself within the Abbaye walls, only to steal out at early dawn, or under the quiet stars of night, when I could not hope to meet her. Using the plea of having much else to do, I gave up meeting her in the confessional, and confided her to a venerable old man, purer and better than I am. I almost dreamed of rivalling Paolo our hermit.

"If the world hath such attractions for thee, flee, flee altogether from it," I heard a voice within me say many times in the day, and oftener still, in the lonely hours of night, when I took up my old custom of haunting the tree-tops, and listening to the plashing murmurs of the dear old Tavy below me. Yet what a remorseful, melancholy sound has the river's voice! Sometimes as I sat there alone with the soft breeze

of the summer night playing in the branches of the oak above and around me, and the world and the monks in the Abbaye all asleep, even our hermit Paolo stretched on his bed of rushes in his little cave across the river, I did not wonder that men and women, compassed by some sore trouble, tormented by unforgiven sin, or by sharp temptation to commit some dreadful deed, plunged into deep pools to end their misery by death Yes, if indeed it were thus ended, I could understand it quite well; but how know we that our souls will not then be attuned to yet fiercer agony, yet more bitter remorse? I have learnt nothing as yet by all the torture I have undergone, save this one lesson—that I cannot judge others; that however low others may fall, my only surprise need be that so many stand, knowing my heart as I know it—knowing the mad impulses that have of late stirred it, the wild longings to brave anything, everything, for one kiss, one smile from her sweet lips. I have been very near—oh, Sancta Maria, forgive me! I have been so much too near to cursing these vows that I once took upon me with earnest zeal and fresh,

untried elasticity of spirit. Now would I never accept a novice, had I the making of monks, unless he had safely passed through, and come out on the other side of, this whirlwind of love, that enters sooner or later into the life of almost every man. God helping me, I will not openly break my vows, and draw disgrace upon the Abbaye and condemnation unto my own soul! God helping me, I will not do that far worse thing that hath been done, and that poor Friar Ethelbert repented himself of doing, with so many and such bitter tears! But if I would keep firm unto these my resolves, I must not dare to see Cicely. Close to her, listening to her voice, beholding her smile, feeling her soft hand in mine, each determination would, as I well know, take swift wings, and leave my heart weak as the water to resist this stone I throw upon it now from the window of my cell. Plash! it drops through the soft, yielding fluid, and sinks to the depths below. So, speedily, if I did but give it leave, would my heart sink into the depths of self-gratification and indulgence.

September 1st, 1522.—My sweet Cicely hath

with her own soft hands, though all unwittingly, fastened the cross upon my heart, that I shall bear, for her dear sake, unto the end of life. Much has happened since my last entry, made, as I see, not fully a fortnight ago. I was sitting early one morning, not in my favourite oak by the river, but upon the height to which is given the name of White Church Down, a pleasant, open spot that borders upon Dartmoor, whence is an excellent prospect of the whole country for many miles around, and a fine view of that strange old tor called Brent Tor, surmounted by its church as with a crest. The church has been built over three hundred years by a merchant of Plymouth, who, sailing out, and being met by fierce storms, dedicated the first point of English land he should see, if spared, to the erection of a church. This vow he here fulfilled, and devoted the church unto St. Michael de Rupe, and this land belongs unto our fair Abbaye.

I was sitting there in the soft beauty of the autumn morning, when the tints of nature are so especially lovely, with a hazy golden light capping the distant tors, and a sky above me of pearl and

opal and azure, one colour melting into the other so exquisitely—the larks all around me were singing, lifting themselves from the purple heath flowers into the fair sky, and sending down upon my ears a shower of music as they rose, and then the golden sunlight waxed brighter and brighter, and flooded the whole earth,—and I lay down on the warm, springy turf, and mused as was my wont—mused of Cicely, and of the long future of my life without her, which yet was each day lessening in length, and which, if I kept "faithful unto death," should happily end by-and-by. For I do believe, and my creed would be sad without this faith, that in heaven we shall know and rejoice in the society of those who are dearest to us on earth; that however truly human relationships may be merged into the higher union and communion of the saints and angels with one another and with Christ, yet that the affections He has planted in us, will there, though often but in bud here, bloom and blossom to all eternity. So, Cicely, thought I, though I may not commune with thee here, because of this body of mine and these vows I have taken, which are so sadly at

variance one with another, yet, beloved, when immortal life begins, I shall be free to love thee as much as I will, for I then can only love thee purely, and I may listen to thy voice amongst the angels, in a land where there are no monasteries and there is no need for monks. There was a very light step upon the turf beside me, and I grew conscious of her presence even before she spoke to me. Though I did not rise for a moment. I felt the blood rush to my face, and my heart give a wild throb of joy—a joy that all the discipline of the last few months has not been able to quench. As I rose to greet her, I did not look nor feel in the least like a grave, stern Augustinian who had renounced the world and its affections.

"I have come on purpose to see thee, dear Friar Hildebrand," she began, with, if possible, a gentler accent than usual. "Molly told me thou wert gone along the road towards the down, and I hastened as soon as I could to come here. Why hast thou not been to Tiddeybrook of late, and what art thou looking so thin and sad for? Hast thou been ill? I have not heard of it."

"No, Cicely, no," I said, trembling from head

to foot, and delighting in her presence and her tender words, wondering what might be the purport of this sweet interest in me, feeling repaid, oh! so amply repaid, for all the sorrow I had endured, and as if the present joy were worth a life of suffering.

"No, dear child, I am not ill."

"Hath not anything been the matter, dear Friar Hildebrand?" she went on, taking my hand as she had done when I first came to Tavystoke, and she was still but a child, and softly smoothing and patting it. Then I looked at Cicely. My own confusion, my own strong emotion, had hitherto prevented my observing that she too had somewhat changed. Her beauty had ripened in the glory of those summer months, a fairer bloom was on cheeks and lips, and as I gazed at her, her eyes were downcast, and a blush flitted hither and thither like a coy bird over her lovely face. For a few brief minutes I flattered myself that I understood the cause of her wistfulness and her tender anxiety—she loved me. This dear innocent heart, used for years to my care for her, had missed me, had longed for me, had asked herself, "Why?"

and had acknowledged in the inmost recesses of her sweet spirit that she loved me. The thought was so deliciously joyous, that, afraid of some rash act, which should fright her from my side, I rose abruptly and paced back and forward for some minutes, without another word to her. Then, coming to her again, I sat down once more. She was pulling some heath flowers to pieces nervously, and the little petals lay scattered over her lap. She looked not up, but said in a trembling voice:

"Dost thou not want me here, Friar Hildebrand? I have sought thee these many weeks past, for I have somewhat to tell thee. I thought thou caredst a little about me."

There was a pretty impatience in her tone, like that of a spoiled child.

"I do care for thee, Cicely, and I would know all that thou likest to tell me," I said. My voice was unsteady. "Care for her"!—oh, sweet darling of my heart, the "care" was tenderest love!

"Dear Friar Hildebrand," she said softly, and turned her blue eyes away from me, for which I thanked her in my inmost soul, "so much has

happened unto me of late. Dost thou know?—no, thou wilt never guess it of such a child as I am, somebody loves me."

And Cicely, having said these words, hid her crimson cheeks in her hands, and paused for my answer.

I am sore afraid I must have disappointed the dear child. For some minutes I could not speak. I heard the larks singing up into the sky, but my heart was out of tune with their sweet silvery music; the little globes of sound came purling down upon the sunshiny landscape, the sheep-bells tinkled in the distance over the moorland, the beetles and flies and bees whirred and droned and buzzed over the turf and the furze bushes in all directions, but I could only echo the words that divided Cicely from me, more even than my monk's hood or my solemn vows—"Somebody loves me!"

Cicely! Cicely! somebody has loved thee for so long, so wildly, so passionately, so intently, that he has done nothing else but love thee. "Somebody loves me!" Thou hast thought of him as thy old, quiet, sober friend at the Abbaye, thy

confessor, thy adviser, anything, everything, Cicely, but thy lover. And thou hast not dreamt—how shouldest thou dream even?—that thy fair image, sweet, is enshrined in every corner of my quiet cell; that thy eyes look up at me from musty parchments, and thy little hands seem to clasp mine even as my brushes wander over the pages of my missals. Dear child, thou hast only seen the iron cross and the monk's garments, and not the living, breathing, loving—oh! so passionately loving—man within them. Yet I cannot, I will not, blame thee, Cicely; how shouldest thou guess it? Thou wouldest even have believed thou wrongedst me to think of it. But all these wild tumultuous thoughts, having place within me, make me so long in answering her, that at last she lifted up her sweet face, and began to speak with a slight frown upon her brow. What is it makes her stop as she looks at me? Why did that strange, tender glance of pity cross her face? Does she now know my secret? Her hand touches me again; her gentle voice speaks soothingly.

"Dear Friar Hildebrand, thou mayest not say

thou art not ill, for thy face has grown white and wan, thy eyes are sunken, and thy hands—why, do but look how thin they are! Something has been the matter; wilt thou not tell thy little favourite Cicely all about it, dear Friar? What hast thou done to thyself?"

"Cicely, I would rather speak to thee of thyself, dear child," I said, trembling again at her kind words. "Somebody loves thee, thou sayest; of whom dost thou speak, fair one?"

Cicely laid her face down upon my hand, and burst into tears.

Now what a wretch am I, thought I within my own soul, thus to spoil the joy and pride of her heart in telling me of her love; thus to cloud her happiness by my sorrow.

"Cicely, Cicely," I said, and I spoke cheerily, to drive away her tears, "look up, dear child, and tell me of this new sweet joy in thy life; I will listen. I feel better now; I think I have been somewhat weak and ill of late, and thou wilt forgive me for my strangeness, Cicely?"

"Oh! dear Friar Hildebrand," quoth she, "dear Friar Hildebrand!" and then she cried again, and

I never knew, and never shall know, I suppose, how much of my heart Cicely guessed that morning on the breezy down, in the golden glory of the autumn-tide. If she learnt aught, I know she felt a loving, tender pity for me, and it soothed my soul. She raised her head soon and steadied her voice, and laid her hand in mine, and told me all, as a child might tell a father, only, I think, a little more freely, for all our strong emotion, than Cicely could have told her father. She knows she has ever had my sympathy, and she has been so used to open her heart to me in the confessional, that when once she began, the whole story came out quite easily.

"He has loved me, dear Friar Hildebrand, ever since last May-day, when I was the queen," said she, "and thou wrotest the song, and made my crown for me; and he says that he shall never love but me—and it is very sweet to be loved, dear Friar Hildebrand, dost thou not think it must be?" She talked on, and asked this question, and then bethought herself of something that made her turn white all suddenly. "I mean," she said again, in sore confusion, "yes, thou knowest what

I mean, dear Friar Hildebrand. Thou wilt forgive me—I do make such stupid blunders now. Mother says she cannot trust me to turn a junket or to beat the butter. I am a silly, silly child, she says, to make a wife of. Thinkest thou so, Friar Hildebrand?"

"Thou wilt do very well, dear Cicely; it is natural thou shouldest be forgetful somewhat; they say, thou knowest, that people in love always make mistakes, so why wonder at thyself, Cicely?"

But I wondered at myself, that my voice was so calm when I spoke to her. I went on: "Thou hast not yet told me who it is that loves thee, Cicely."

"Oh, there!" she said, with a light, merry laugh; "now must thou think me as stupid as my mother does. My father says it is a good thing that it is a man who has a spare penny or two, else should I speedily ruin him. It is Walter Hawley, the miller at the Abbaye Mills, dear Friar Hildebrand; surely thou knowest him well, dost thou not?"

Walter Hawley! The vision of the handsome young miller rose before me; he was, doubtless,

a fine, honest, good fellow, but——. Was there ever a lover who rested quite satisfied regarding the fitness of the man his mistress married, unless it be himself?

"And thou lovest Walter, Cicely?"

She turned her face to me as I spoke; there was her whole soul in her sweet eyes, and they told me that she did, without the added words:

"So much, dear Friar Hildebrand."

"God bless you both, Cicely." I said it heartily, but a weight like lead came down into my soul at that moment, and shut out the sunshine, and the lark's song, and all that was fair.

"I wanted so much to tell thee, dear Friar Hildebrand, and I wish thou wouldest be my confessor again. I cannot speak so freely to good old Friar Henry, though he is very kind to me."

"Not yet, Cicely, not yet." I almost groaned as I spoke.

"Now, I am sure thou art ill and faint, dear Friar Hildebrand," she said. "Stop here till I bring thee something from the farm; I pray thee stop here," she added, seeing I was about to rise, "I will presently return to thee."

With that she sped away as noiselessly as she had come, and left me alone. Thus had my doubts, my fears, ended, but not my love. No, Cicely, thy heart is safe, sweet one—safe in another's keeping, and thou whisperest softly often in the day those pretty words, "He loves me," and thinkest of the gay young miller and the merry mill-wheel with its rainbow-hued crystals; but thou art as sure of the love of the quiet, grave monk amongst his missals and his paints as of his who is to be thy husband. I can only think of my misery to-day, thought I; in the days that are to come, when I have battled bravely with my grief, I will think of thy joy, thy happiness, and be glad in it.

Cicely soon came back to me, and she brought some delicate wheaten cakes of her own making, together with a bowl of junket, sweet and cool and fresh as the bright morning; and when I had eaten these from her fair hands my spirit revived, for I had indeed been long fasting, and I rose and returned with her from the down, talking to her as of old, while she answered me with her usual affection and reverence. And when I parted

from her at the gate of Tiddeybrook and returned to her the wicker basket which I had carried for her, I pursued my way along the road, crossed over the bridge beside the Abbaye, and so down into our meadows, not as yet seeking my own cell, but walked on to my old oak-tree, and sat in its branches, and faced the storm that had come upon me since matins, and tried the weight of the cross that had been given me to bear.

THE PILGRIM AND THE RELICS.

10

CHAPTER X.

THE PILGRIM AND THE RELICS.

NOVEMBER 19th, 1522.—We have had an interesting visitor at our Abbaye during a whole week, and the tales he has had to tell of peril and adventure have beguiled many an otherwise dull evening of its dulness, and have brought quite a goodly assemblage every night into our common hall, where, round the blazing, cheerful fire, built with good stout logs of wood, we have listened intently and with amazement to his varied narrative.

The palmer whom we are thus privileged to entertain, and to be entertained by in return, Friar Robert by name, is a Frenchman, and discourses with all the vivacity native to his countrymen of that which has happened to him. He has traversed many regions I fain would see. His feet have trod the holy soil of Palestine; he

has beheld the Holy Sepulchre; he has wandered in the olive groves of the Gethsemane garden; climbed up Olivet; paused at Bethany; stood in the sacred grotto of Bethlehem; strayed through the little town of Nazareth; gazed, too, at Sinai, and contemplated the pyramids and the Nile. The Scriptures are, for him, not merely records of facts, but illustrated reading, each page illuminated by the mental pictures of what he has actually gazed upon.

The occasion of his coming here, however, was through various accidents and mishaps that befel him. He took passage from Alexandria for his native shores, intending to land in due course at the port of Marseilles; but he suffered shipwreck, and was exposed for some days, together with three or four of his fellow voyagers, in an open boat and in a stormy sea. From this they were rescued by a Cornish trader from the respectable borough of Fowey. Glad to be delivered from their hardships, though at the cost of much further delay and travelling, they thankfully accepted the captain's offer to bring them to England.

Friar Robert was especially anxious to arrive in

the fair capital of his own country in safety, since he had been entrusted with two precious relics, choice gifts from the Lady Abbess of the Convent at Jerusalem, to the Archbishop of Paris for the church of Notre Dame.

These relics were of no less moment than a tooth of St. Nicholas, and a fragment of the garment worn by the Virgin Mary at the blessed Annunciation. These, enclosed separately in minute crystal shrines, encased with gold, Friar Robert had worn concealed beneath his robes, and with him they had already escaped a watery grave. Perhaps, our hermit Paolo piously observed, because of these precious relics guarded by the friar, his own life was continued, that he might bear them in safety to their destination.

But, do as I will, I can hardly bring my mind to believe that the bone of a dead man, however holy, and the fragment of the robe of a pious woman, however notable, even so notable and holy as the blessed Virgin herself, can be more worthy the protecting care of the Father of all mankind than the life of one of His children.

Be this as it may, Friar Robert, thus rescued, set

sail in the good ship *Pride of Fowey*, and had safely crossed the too-often treacherous Bay of Biscay, had then skirted the western coasts of France, when, just before entering the Channel, whilst yet in the open sea, they encountered a terrible storm, the like of which even he, used as he was to watery perils, had never known. The land near to which they were had better have been sea than land, for all the protection it could afford them in many parts, being a series of islands, some large, some small, abounding in shoals and reefs and rocks of treacherous kind. These islands traded largely in very ancient times with the Phœnicians, then with the Greeks and Romans, for tin, which they produced in great abundance and of fine quality. Divers names have been given to this group of islands by different nations, the ancients calling them Cassiterides, the Greeks continuing this appellation as well as that of Hesperides, the Romans bestowing on them the name of Silures and Sigdeles, now more generally named Sylley, or Scilly. The Danes had these islands for awhile, having conquered them from the Ancient Britons, whose

priests, the Druids, left many traces behind them of their presence in quaintly devised stones, cromlechs, sacrificial basins, and tombs for the mighty dead.

Our good King Athelstan of blessed memory, when he had made an end of subduing Cornubia, set himself to the task of subjugating the Danes on these islands, and succeeded in the year 938. In the reign of Henry I. a grant was made to Osbert, the Abbot of our own dear Abbaye of Tavystoke at that time, of "all the churches of Scilly, together with their appurtenances," and the ecclesiastical succession was settled on his successors under the Bishop of Exeter.

There are two fair and principal islands belonging to this group: the one which is the largest is St. Nicholas or Trescaw; the other, St. Mary's. Upon St. Nicholas was built a fair abbey in the form of a cross, having pointed arches of Norman stone finely wrought. This Abbey was enriched after the Conquest by some of the Earls of Cornwall. Near to the abbey, which is dedicated to St. Nicholas, and which is sheltered by an evergreen bank of very beauteous appearance high

enough to keep out the sea, stood a forest of elder trees, as the name Trescaw implies, with a breed therein of wild boars, all which was given by King John to the Abbey; but on this forest the sea has from time to time much encroached.

There is also a fine fresh-water pond, half a mile in length, and nearly three miles wide, the water of which is quite clear.

All these particulars of these remote islands I have long known, and I have taken an interest in them, as dependencies, so to speak, of our beloved abode, and now my interest has been re-awakened, and my knowledge increased, by the visit of Friar Robert coming fresh to us from those parts.

But to continue his tale. The *Pride of Fowey* beat about amongst these rockbound islands like a child's toy-boat, and finally was thrown hither and thither by the violence of the waves. Now ensued a terrible scene; men were drowning with wild cries for help upon their lips, and agony painted upon their white faces. Friar Robert, believing now that death by shipwreck must be his appointed means of exit from life, almost resolved to throw the relics with all his might upon

the sharp rock, and then to abandon himself to the sea; when, suddenly, help came.

A number of the brave islanders, joined to each other by means of ropes, made a vigorous attempt to reach and rescue them, some standing upon the shores of the island of St. Mary; others scrambling over dangerous ledges of rocks, which, here abrupt and bold, there low in the water, make together such pictures of rock scenery, as for grandeur and majesty of outline, even so great a traveller as our Friar Robert, believes cannot be surpassed.

By the aid of these kindly and hardy men many were saved who must otherwise have perished, and Friar Robert was amongst them. They were presently brought to the Abbey of St. Nicholas as a place where they might be sure of a welcome; and so they found it, for the good friars furnished an abundant meal, at once to the famished sailors and the saintly but hungry pilgrim, of stewed rabbits and fried fish, of both which provisions they have great abundance, also wheaten and barley bread and new-laid eggs—fare which a king might enjoy. In addition to these

good things indigenous to the islands, they possessed some luxuries, such as fruits and spices from the Levant, brought to them by captains of vessels, who exchanged such commodities for as much fresh bread and meat and vegetables as they could supply. The natives of Scilly are soft and agreeable in manners; they are quiet, prudent, sensible, yet social people, though seldom indulging in festivity, excepting on stated occasions.

During Friar Robert's visit, a wedding took place between two young people of Trescaw, and was followed by curious merry-makings: the guests danced through the streets, and in and out of the houses, such being their custom.

Though the weather had at first been so rough and boisterous, the sea became greatly subdued after a day or two, and, though late in the autumn, the atmosphere was as balmy and delightful as in far more southern latitudes.

Friar Robert, who enjoys fine scenery greatly, gladly accepted the hearty invitation of the monks of St. Nicholas's Abbey to remain with them for a season, till some ship should arrive suitable to carry him to England. But a strange thing

happened while he tarried there. The first moment when opportunity was given to him, after being saved from the wreck and the stormy ocean, he carefully examined the precious relics. His joy was unbounded, and his thankfulness sincere and devout, at finding the shrines safe within the folds of his robe. What then were his terror and consternation a few days later to find both of them missing! In much trepidation and surprise he searched everywhere for them, unwilling to communicate his loss, and so implicate any one in the supposed robbery of his treasure.

A ship well suited for him to proceed on his journey now put into the harbour at St. Mary's, and there was but little excuse for him to remain longer at the Abbey on Trescaw; but how to go and leave such treasures behind him he knew not. Wherefore, in much disturbance of mind, he resolved to communicate that evening the whole circumstance to the Abbot, and entreat his advice and counsel. That wise and good man was walking in the pleasant gardens of the Abbey, full of many delightful and fragrant plants, which grow in abundance in these islands, whose winter

is so mild. The soft beams of the moon shone on his venerable countenance and long white beard as Friar Robert approached and requested an audience.

"What is it, my son?"

Then, with much anxiety, the stranger recounted his loss. He spoke of the relics with which he had been entrusted, the extraordinary preservation which had hitherto attended them, and his despair at losing them.

"And what were they like, my son?" asked the venerable Abbot.

Friar Robert minutely described them.

"Attend me in the refectory at the end of two hours; and now leave me," said the Abbot.

Much surprised at this command, the friar bowed and quitted the holy man's presence. At the appointed time he appeared at the common dining-hall, where the Abbot and all the monks of the Abbey were assembled. The Abbot sat in his chair of state at the head of the table; the monks around it, as if a meal were to be served.

"A grave scandal hath occurred in this Abbey," said the Abbot, casting his dark and piercing

eyes around, as soon as room had been made for the stranger beside the empty board. "A monk of this Abbey, thinking, doubtless, to do this religious house an honour—for I will not impute worse motives to him—hath abstracted certain relics enclosed in crystal shrines from the person of one who came amongst us, a brother of another honourable fraternity, saved from the perils of the treacherous rocks that surround our island home. But the glory of God and the fame of our patron saint can never be advanced by acts contrary to the commandments, such as thievery and roguery, however meritorious the desire from which these actions may spring. Wherefore, let him who purloined these precious relics, thinking to do either one or the other, freely confess his guilt, and restore the abstracted treasures."

The monks in much bewilderment looked one at the other, the innocent in anxious doubt, and the guilty, if guilty one there was, in perplexity and fear. There was a long and embarrassing pause.

Then Friar Robert requested permission to speak, and having obtained it, he explained what

the relics were, how he came by them, and how he had been commissioned to convey them in safety to their future resting-place, and the distress he naturally felt at being unable to fulfil this purpose.

There was no response either to the Abbot's command or Friar Robert's appeal, and in doubt and perplexity as to the next step he should take in the matter, he retired soon after to rest. But no sooner had he sought the solitude of the cell which had been allotted to him during his residence at Trescaw, and fallen upon his knees to repeat his prayers, than he heard a voice saying in a low tone, "Arise, and look about thee!" Which he immediately proceeded to do, and there before him on the floor of his cell, glittering under the feeble light of his small lamp, and the light of the moon outside, were the crystal shrines of the precious relics, as if they had miraculously appeared above the ground.

This mystery Friar Robert could never solve, whether they had been hidden by the rushes that bestrewed the floor of the cell, or whether a friar of St. Nicholas's Abbey had really purloined them,

and when appealed to by his Abbot had seen it right to restore them, but had confided the deed and the manner of restoration only to his confessor, or whether the loss had been but for the trial of the pilgrim's faith, and the recovery a miracle. But whichever it was, the story interested us all much, and was even the occasion of many curious and intricate discussions between our own friars.

I have carefully examined these relics of the Friar Robert, and have found myself in a state of mind regarding them which I cannot quite explain. Most of our number devoutly reverence them—I may even say, adore them,—and this I cannot by any means persuade myself to do. I find my doubtful mind questioning whether these be truly the tooth of St. Nicholas and a fragment of the robe of the Holy Virgin worn by her on the blessed day of the Annunciation. Was the garment of a simple village maiden of Nazareth of such wondrous texture as to resist the ravages and marks of centuries? If not, was it an object worthy the performance of a miracle? Was the tooth of St. Nicholas impervious to the action of

those changes which affect the bones of other mortals? Is it desirable, even were these veritable relics, that we should place the consideration of them above our appreciation of the character of the saints? Is not the saint himself something better than his bones and skull? Is not the Holy Virgin more than her robe? Are relics a real help to devotion? I am surprised when I see the reverence with which some of the least thoughtful friars regard these relics. Does superstition atone for the want of holiness?

YE HISTORY OF LIVINGUS, ABBOT OF TAVYSTOKE, BISHOP OF DEVON, WHO JOURNEYED INTO ITALY IN YE COMPANIE OF YE KING CANUTE YE DANE.

II

CHAPTER XI.

YE HISTORY OF LIVINGUS, ABBOT OF TAVYSTOKE, BISHOP OF DEVON, WHO JOURNEYED INTO ITALY IN YE COMPANIE OF YE KING CANUTE YE DANE.

My next manuscript scarcely equalleth the former ones, either in picturesqueness of description or interest of subject, yet it doth well illustrate the greatness of our Abbey, and the distinctions attained by some of its abbots, and is therefore deserving the attention of our order. It is as follows:—

Now it cometh to pass after much fighting between Danes and Angles, ye Dane getteth ye victorie. So that when ye land hath been now under Sweyn, now restored to Ethelred, now beneath the lawful dominion of ye Saxon Edmund Ironsides, and again subdued by ye strong arm of ye Danish Canute, it doth at length find peace

in ye reign of this last-mentioned and most mightie monarch, who now that he hath time to attend to ye affairs of State showeth himself a wise and godlie man, one that feareth God, and owneth ye almightinesse of His power. For among ye first of his pious works is ye rebuilding and re-establishing of ye monasteries, in which his countrie-men had done no small hurt and damage, and amongst them may be speciallie noted our said Abbaye of Tavystoke, ye which he restoreth to more than its ancient grandeur, adding thereunto divers fair buildings, and endowing various adjoining parishes with churches and oratories, so that ye Gospell might be preached far and near, and overspread throughout ye whole countrie of Damnonia. Next he doth installe goodlie personages into ye various benefices, and amongst these is one Livingus, being ye second who hath attained unto this dignitie, whom he straightway places over ye Abbaye of Tavystoke, which shineth forth in all its old beauty amongst its embowering trees, and beside its murmuring river. And it may well be that out of his true affection for Livingus he did put

him into this faire place, so that he might have no small enjoyment in ye possession of this goodlie heritage; and here he continueth him for no short time, even until higher honours await him. For next, ye bishopric of ye county is bestowed upon him, and he merelie changeth his abbotship of Tavystoke to take up his abode in ye episcopal mansion at Crediton, where was then ye cathedral of ye diocese, though afterward, and in his time, removed to Exeter, near unto.

Livingus was a man of no small parts, else surelie he had not had such honours shown unto him by so worthie a monarch. Nephew was he unto Brithwald, Bishop of St. Germans, in Cornwall, an episcopal chair which ye natives of that region had held above 120 years, but which, as we shall see presentlie, they were not destined to hold much longer. Livingus doth much enhance ye fame of his abbaye; he encourageth learning therein, establisheth schools for ye proper teaching of ye Saxon tongue, now somewhat endangered by ye inroads of ye Danes, and addeth to ye libraries of ye abbaye by setting his monks diligentlie to work in ye transcription

of rare and valuable manuscripts, which he taketh paines to borrow and purchase in divers directions for their use and benefit.

So passeth many happy yeares, wherein he is beloved by ye monks and by ye poor for his good deedes, and setteth on foot many wise and notable works, ye rather living with than above his monks, as is ye manner of too many heads of cloisters in our day. A close friendship doth he keep all this time with ye pious Canute, untill that in ye yeare 1032 this king prepareth himself for a pilgrimage to Rome, there to behold ye tombs of ye blessed saints Peter and Paul, to confess his sins at their oratories, and to be absolved at ye hands of ye holy Pontiff. So now, being determined upon this pilgrimage, a messenger arriveth in hot haste at our Abbaye of Tavystoke, who beareth a letter from ye king to his dear liege friend Livingus, Abbot of Tavystoke, which, when this good man readeth, he lifteth his eyes and his hands likewise in astonishment, and is much moved and concerned for ye many things of which it treats. For first of all he learneth that he is no longer only an abbot,

but a bishop, and that of this his native county of Devon; secondlie, that ye king, his master, desireth his companie unto ye city of Rome; and, thirdly, that he must not, unto ye one or ye other, say him 'nay.'

So, then, being very much amazed and overwhelmed at these intelligences, Livingus seeketh ye hermit of ye Tavy, an old and well-beloved monk, who giveth unto him much goodlie counsel, and, above all, warneth him against despising ye injunctions of so pious a monarch, but ye rather to accept all ye honours offered to him freelie, and to ye good of his immortal soule. For that, though he had been heretofore well content to abide in England even all his days, and would be so still, had not a fit opportunitie thus arisen to visit holy places, yet should he now willinglie enter upon pilgrimage to ye great refreshing and strengthening of all pure desires, and to ye speedier entrance of his soule, when death seizeth him, into ye Paradise of God. Then, first being duly installed in his bishopric, Livingus biddeth farewell unto his monks, enjoining them unto ye practice of pure and virtuous lives, who with

many sighs and tears, witnesse his departure; then he setteth forth straightwaye for ye King's palace, ye which being come unto, he is welcomed with much heartinesse, and ye King, having arranged ye matters of his kingdom, setteth out upon his pilgrimage. All ye divers incidents and adventures of ye way, this Livingus hath so vividly set forth in his book of "Canutus's Pilgrimage, and My own Doings," of which a fair transcription is extant in ye library of this said Abbaye of Tavystoke, that I need not mention them here, save to note that having with some perill and several accidents arrived in Rome, they proceed unto ye splendid churches of St. Peter and St. Paul without more ado, to lay their offerings upon ye several shrines, and then, having somewhat refreshed themselves, repair to ye Castle of St. Angelo, and seek ye presence of ye august Pontiff, John XIX., who receiveth them with much gladness and due honour, ye rather that he hath a great matter on hand, and is willing to have one more sovereign in his train to add unto its lustre. This is no other than ye crowning of Conrad II., ye Em-

peror of Germany, at which ceremony not only our Canute, but Rodolph III., King of Burgundy, was also present. For here, at Rome, did these German Emperors, now made masters of Italy, receive ye golden crown, while ye silver one of Germany was placed upon their heads at Aix-la-Chapelle; and ye iron one, that asserteth their right to Lombardy, at Milan. A full account of which crowning findeth place in ye before mentioned manuscript, whereof Bishop Livingus is ye author, and wherein from ye power of his pen, ye reader beholdeth at once ye jewels, ye mitres, and ye crosses, and ye lustre of ye golden crown, all which flash and sparkle before ye eye, like unto objects that are truly in our dazzled sight; but which my poore hand tryeth in vaine to describe. No lesse doth he picture with wondrous distinctnesse ye mightie monarch, Conrad, he who founded ye cathedral church of Spires, and ye Saxon Rodolph, who proved to be ye last King of Burgundy, for after his death this same Conrad swallowed up his vast inheritance, but profited little by it, for it speedilie became dismembered, profiting by ye remotenesse of royal

authority, and ye troubles of ye empire. But most of all, our Abbot of Tavystoke and Bishop of Devon pleaseth himselfe in displaying ye grandeur of his own king, unto whom he oweth so much of duty and affection, and who shone conspicuous, as it would seem, by his graceful form, his noble mien, and his dignified carriage. Whereat our Livingus waxeth eloquent, and saith, "This so great and puissant monarch, who oweth allegiance to none, save unto ye King of Kings, and unto His Holinesse ye Pope, hath yet a humble hearte and a sweet courtesie; as may be known by all who did witnesse, as I did, that scene upon ye sands at Southampton when his courtiers did grossly flatter him, and tell him he was more than human, and receive from him pleasantlie a most just and wise rebuke; for he, sitting down while ye tide cometh towards him, seemeth to playfully check ye approach of ye waves. 'And thus, and thus,' saith he, 'do ye thus dare to wet your monarch's feet? Have ye not heard from these gentles that I am lord of all and everything, and that ye have no leave to come where I am, unless I speciallie permit?' And all this

while there spreadeth a merrie smile over his features.

"'Back! back!' he saith to each advance of ye tide, and when ye waves come dashing on, all ye more angrily, as it would appeare, he pusheth his chair to a somewhat safer distance, and waiteth againe.

"'I charge thee,' saith he unto ye sea, 'that thou presume not to enter my land, nor to wet these robes of thy lord that are about me.'

"Whereupon ye courtiers behind him, who had been so lavish in their grosse flatterie, bite their lips; others amongst them frown, and shake their heads, and others mutter, 'Is ye man mad, thus to believe us?' ye while they shrink further and further back into ye shore, and leave their royal master in ye midst of ye in-coming tide. It rolleth up grandlie with its crest of foam, all sparkling in ye sunshine, wetting not only his royal feet, but up and up unto ye chair he resteth upon, and causeth his flowing robes to droop with ye heavinesse of ye salt water they have soaked up. Then he slowlie riseth, and taketh my arm, for I had stood near unto him ye while,

even when ye water came far up my legs, and then he turneth with a sweet dignitie unto ye sneering yet fawning courtiers, who stood wonderinglie at a safe distance, that their own dainty toes might escape a wetting.

"'Let all ye world's inhabitants know,' saith he, 'that vaine and weak is ye power of their kings, and that none is worthy of ye name of king, but He that keeps both heaven and earth and sea at His command.'

"After which," saith our bishop, "he would never suffer ye crown to be placed upon his head, but adorneth with it ye likenesse of Christ upon ye cross at Winchester."

Livingus at Rome.

Our Livingus, whilst he fully inspects with his royal master ye wonders of ye Seven-hilled City, hath another matter confided to him, even ye inditing of a letter from King Canute unto ye bishops and nobles of England, ye which he gives in full in his said history of ye pilgrimage, out of which it is enough here to say that it enjoyneth these, in whose hands ye governance of ye king-

dom was left, "That they should be careful to administer justice, and never seek to advance ye king's profit by any undue ways, nor to ye detriment of any person whatsoever."

A just and noble injunction, worthy of ye King who framed and ye prelate who transcribed it.

Being come back safely into England, our abbot-bishop did not much longer enjoy ye favour and friendship of this good king, for four years after being returned from his pilgrimage, Canute, ye Dane, who had endeared himself even to his beforetime enemies, by his justice and moderation, departed this life. Yet not before he had given unto Livingus a yet greater proof of his friendship and love, by joining ye Cornish bishopric of St. German's unto that of Devon (Brithwald, uncle to Livingus being now dead), and making ye seat of ye episcopal chair to be no longer at Crediton, but at Exeter, in ye last-mentioned county.

Howbeit, after that this, his royal and noble friend and patron, was dead, he still continued in favour with his son and successor, Harold, who, though a weak and dissipated prince, bestowed

ye bishopric of Worcester upon his father's friend, all which preferments Livingus sustained, keeping ye governance of all in his own hands as long as he lived, notwithstanding ye misunderstanding and misadventures which thereafter happened to him as followeth. Harold, having in some sense usurped ye throne of England from his brother, Hardicanute, to whom ye wise king, their father, had, as many declare, left it, while others as stoutly assert ye contrary, feeleth himself in a degree of jeopardy regarding his own position, and so planneth a piece of deception with respect to ye Saxon line, which, when discovered, rather weakeneth than strengtheneth his cause, and by aiding him in which, or even by being accused of aiding him, Livingus loseth for ye space of a whole year, in ye reign of Hardicanute, those privileges and emoluments he had before enjoyed.

And thus it happened. Ethelred ye Unready (nearly related to ye founders of our abbaye), who had been deposed by ye Danes, being dead, left two sons by his wife Emma —ye one Edward and ye other Alfred, both now in ye safe keeping of ye Duke of Normandy, to whose court their

widowed mother had sent them. Harold, ye king, causeth a letter to be written to these youths, informing them that Canute was dead, and persuading them to come over to England and try to obtain possession of ye crown. This letter purporteth to come from their mother, and reacheth first Alfred, ye younger son. He replieth that he will come. Being arrived with a small fleet upon ye coast of Kent, he is received by Earl Goodwin, who doth traitorously propose to bring ye prince and his followers unto ye Queen Emma, his mother; but being in ye pay of ye King Harold, leadeth them instead unto ye town of Guileford, ye traitorous nature of which meeting, and ye cruel deception practised here upon this poore youth, are retained in this name Guile-ford, ever since attached unto this place; whereat all are slain save every tenth man by ye order of Harold, and ye young Prince Alfred is conveyed to ye Island of Ely, where his eyes are barbarously put out, and he endeth his days in griefe and torment, a helpless prisoner. Whereupon Alfricus, Archbishop of York, accuseth Livingus, directly Hardicanute cometh to be king at

Harold's death, for joyning in ye conspiracy with Earl Goodwin against ye prince's life. And surelie if ye matter had been proved against him, I could have taken no pleasure in stating his power over our faire abbaye, but inasmuch as this Alfricus was himself thrust out of his chair for a season for interference in secular matters, and therefore, he might well have a grudge against another bishop, and seek to hide his own faults under those of his neighbour; and because that Livingus was reinstated after explaining ye whole matter, unto all his former offices and powers, I am ye more inclined to believe that if he took part at all, in this iniquitous businesse, he did so without joyning in ye crueltie and hardnesse of heart that could impose such un-Christlike torture on a young and innocent human being. And now there draweth nigh unto this great Prelate, as to all other mortals, ye time when he must give up his honours and his breath; and, for that ancient affection of his unto his faire Abbaye, he chooseth its shelter for his weary frame, and willeth that his bones shall find sepulture in ye Abbaye Church, ye which tomb I have myself

often seen, and meditated thereupon. But he was not to pass out of this world quietlie, for on that very day, and at that very hour wherein his soule departed, there was such a horrible crash of thunder heard throughout all England that 'twas thought ye ruin and end of ye world was come. And truly alreadye was ye man born who was to make ye end of our Saxon and Danish lines of Kings in England, and revolutionise ye whole nation under his powerful sway.

But Livingus lifteth his eyes unto heaven, and ye cross unto his lips, and so maketh a peaceful exit, notwithstanding that he left a noisy world and a stormy sky behind him.

Here endeth ye history of Livingus II., Abbot of Tavystoke, Bishop of Devon and Bishop of Worcester.

THE FRIAR AND THE CHILDREN AT SCHOOL.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FRIAR AND THE CHILDREN AT SCHOOL.

NOVEMBER 30th, 1522.—I have finished my illuminations for the history of Livingus, second abbot of our Abbaye; I have sketched our Saxon School, with its pupils, as the subject of one picture; I have depicted the coronation of the Emperor Conrad by the Pope, King Canute and our Livingus being present, and I have drawn the fleet of vessels that brought the poor young Prince Alfred from Normandy, and disembarked him and his followers upon the coast of Kent, just safely escaping those treacherous Goodwin Sands, that are not more fatal to the mariners that run unsuspectingly upon them, than was the cruel earl whose name they bear to the fair Saxon Prince who met him there. But I am grievously disappointed with regard to that other manuscript

to which this history refers, descriptive of the journey to Rome of the King Canute and Bishop Livingus, and written by the latter.

No sooner did I read of it in the brown pages of the parchment, and learn that the monk who transcribed this record had read it in the library of our Abbaye, and therefore did not see fit to enter more fully into the story of the pilgrimage, than I turned, descended from my cell, and hurried across the green to the library, and, entering it, plunged at once into the search with eager avidity. This I was enabled to do all the more readily and easily, because I am custodian of the place, both of the rolls and missals and parchments as well as the new books printed at our printing press, which was set up in our Abbaye the very year in which I came to Tavystoke. It already does us good service, and in its working I take the most lively interest; nor do I fail to rejoice that we have the honour and glory at this little town of having one of the very first printing presses in all England. Our Saxon grammar has been brought to perfection by it, and I hail this new means of diffusing knowledge throughout the

world, although I already foresee that my work amongst missals and manuscripts must ere long give place to this better mode of preserving and multiplying the records of the great thoughts and worthy deeds of more ancient times, as well as of our own contemporaries. But if any coming after me shall linger over my old papers and written books, may they think kindly of him who, before the great and grand art of printing was discovered, had learnt the art of illuminating and transcribing, in order that he might thereby serve God, and make the history and sweet counsels of the Divine Son of God, as well as those of His apostles and disciples, and the works of other great men in the world, just a little more within the reach of the loving and thoughtful hearts of men by the greater abundance of good and pure books.

I have rambled from my subject of the missing manuscript. I would give much to find "Canute's Pilgrimage and My Own Doings"; but I have sought it many hours in vain. Alas! some careless, unreading eye has passed it over as worthless; some hand has, perhaps, thrown it away.

I had recourse at length to our present ruler, Richard Banham, who has, I grieve to say, more regard to his dignities than his duties, or, at least, busies himself further in the one than the other. For being already a mitred abbot, and admitted as a baron of the higher House of Parliament, he seeks to free himself from all authority save that of His Holiness, Pope Leo, and in this he has just succeeded on this condition, that he pays to the Apostolic Chamber, on the feasts of St. Peter and St. Paul, half an ounce of gold, *i.e.*, twenty shillings of our lawful money. But in this matter of the manuscript I applied to him, and received from him a courteous hearing, but no information touching the lost document; yet he gave an old record to me possessed by the Abbots of this Abbaye above one hundred years, wherein is entered the titles of all manuscripts at that time in our library. Over this, too, I looked in vain for the treatise of the Bishop Livingus; but having this list, I am determined to seek every one of the books it mentions, and to make a new list of the books at present in the library up to

that year in which I may be able to finish it, for the better guidance in this particular of those who may come after me; and of this, for its further preservation, I will either print myself or cause to be printed, several copies.

I have undertaken since I last wrote in this diary, to teach a class daily of the boys in our schools. Continuous thought in my solitary cell was more than I could bear; work, useful employment, daily toil—while it is the punishment of man's transgression by Adam in Paradise—is also the means mercifully appointed for us to check our too constant outbursts of sorrow, our too morbid dwelling upon difficulties. For some it is, on the contrary, the means to counterbalance the too sweet, too enervating delights of love and home; this will it be by-and-by for Walter Hawley and Cicely; while for myself, I am glad to drown my repeated questionings and repinings and regrets amongst the busy life of the school, and the merry, innocent faces of the boys. They grow fond of me, these young, fresh hearts, and I, who have always had a love for children

such as without which I conceive no manhood can be true and noble, or worthy of that Friend of little children, our dear Master, Christ; have come to look eagerly for their smiles, to prize their brightening faces as I draw near, and to delight in their warm greetings. "Friar Hildebrand," quoth one youngster yesterday to me in confidence, "thou art kinder to me than father is; I mean to love thee better than I do him." "Saucy child, I have not so much reason to be cross to thee perchance," I answered him, stroking his almost white flaxen hair; "thou dost not give thy father such ready obedience as thou dost me, I suspect, serve him tenderly, respectfully, my son, and thou wilt soon win his love also."

These youngsters get to know and frequent my old haunts in meadow and moorland, and gather round me to learn the stories I can tell them of the birds and flowers and beetles and fishes. It is but little I know myself of the marvellous instincts God has implanted even in His smallest and humblest creatures, but yet, methinks, our talk has already had effect

upon these dear but hitherto so thoughtless boys, in teaching them a tenderer love for nature, and a kindlier feeling for the dumb animals, and the sweet little songsters of the grove. I think there will be fewer nests robbed, now that they know somewhat of the pains-taking industry of lark and linnet, blackbird and thrush.

During these autumn evenings, when I sat upon the banks and downs, or walked beside the river, surrounded by my children, we often saw Walter Hawley and Cicely, enjoying like ourselves the soft beauty of the scene; and still more, I strongly suspect, the sweet tales of love, the happy glances, the bashful smiles, the drooping eyes, the rapturous kisses that passed between them. Thou art happy, dear Cicely; in that thought there is a balm for my soul. I shall after awhile, God helping me, soar above the love-sick fancies, the passionate yearnings towards thee, that trouble me; or, still better, I shall be able calmly to blend this, my true love for thee, with all the duties of my life, and be a wiser, a kinder, a gentler man for

having known and loved thee, and for all my sore experience. The heart loses nothing by loving, even if the love is, as we are wont to call it, unfortunate, because not wholly returned to us in kind. As I conceive, our characters are purified and perfected by it, so long as our passion never eclipses our duty, so long as we seek less our own selfish delight, than the lasting happiness of our beloved one.

"God is love." This truth, which is the key-note of God's dealings with us, and which the divine St. John taught to both old and young, as he went about in his last days, aged and infirm, but with a glorious tender beauty on his face—fills my whole soul at this moment. Yes, dearest Lord, Thou Man of sorrows, Thou art in this particular the very impersonation of Thy Father's nature. Oh! as often as I behold Thee upon the cross, or listen to Thy gentle, compassionate words to Thy sleeping disciples in the garden, or feel Thy whispers in my own heart, I re-learn the mighty truth, "God is love." All our poor attempts at loving each other and Thee are such miserable failures

when compared with Thy free, full outpouring of tenderness: and yet they bring us somewhat nearer unto Thee. The child that does its little task to win the love-look in its mother's face; the man that denies himself to give some pleasure to his beloved one; the mother who risks her life for her sick infant; the wife who stands the closer at her husband's side, because all the world is pouring scorn upon his head—all these are liker unto God for the pure affection they feel; and somewhat reflect—as the pale moon reflects the golden sun—the lustre of God's brightness. Yes, all the troubles of these earthly loves of ours will be over one day, but the love itself, sanctified from the passion that mars its heavenliness here, will remain. And as my thought thus framed itself, my heart breathed softly the refrain of many of our anthems: Hallelujah, Amen.

AROUND THE YULE LOG.

CHAPTER XIII.

AROUND THE YULE LOG.

CHRISTMAS has come again. Truly time lingers not for man's joys or sorrows. Everywhere the yule log burns, and there is an echo of the joy of the angels 1,500 years ago; but for all that, and though I too can rejoice for the glad evangel, my heart is weary and sad to-day, and this blessed source of joy runs along it, only as a little rill of comfort, where there seems to flow a very river of death. Great God! Thou dost baptize us into Thyself by our griefs, and comfort us by Thy rod; but we rebel—alas! how our poor weak souls rebel—against the process. I am weary of my lonely life; weary of all things. Our Abbot has just received from the royal hand, for the use and profit of our abbaye, and the instruction of its monks, a copy

of that admirable treatise of the King against the heresy of the German apostate, Martin Luther: a book that has gained for him, from Pope Leo, the worthy title of Defender of the Faith. Into all this matter, if but to distract my soul from its bitterness, I am inclined to make a plunge ere long, for I know little at present of these strange German doctrines, and I fain would understand the nature of the power that has so mightily influenced the minds of men against the Church of their fathers. Also it becomes us all to appreciate the argument of our King's pious work, and in order the better to understand that whereof he treats, we must also comprehend the heresy which he opposes.

New Year's Day, 1523.—No sooner had I written the above paragraph in this my diary on Christmas Day, after I had returned from performing my part in the celebration of High Mass in our abbaye church, than I was summoned to receive a messenger from Cicely, who begged I would come to Tiddeybrook to spend my Christmas as I had been wont to do these years past,

ever since I had returned to Devonshire, after my long sojourn in Italy. Her message was brought by her little nephew Hal, who has but lately become my scholar, and who added his own entreaties to hers with much eagerness. I was well pleased that in all her mirthful happiness and new joy, the dear child did not forget her old friend, and bidding Hal wait for me, I returned to my cell, closed and locked away this diary with no small alacrity, while a gleam of heart sunshine spread over that dreary waste of water to which I had so despondingly likened my heart just before. With the dear boy's hand in mine, I ascended the hill to Tiddeybrook, not forgetting to note to him the varied beauties of Nature that even in the drear winter season mark the hand of the Almighty Artist. There were the coral berries on the holly bushes, that thickly studded the Abbaye Green, and lined the hedgerows; there were the golden blossoms—somewhat sparse now, it must be confessed—of the furze, that sweet, yet hardy flower, that gladdens the eyes and perfumes the air at all seasons, though most of all when the fragrant may is in full bloom, to

mingle its silver with the gold, and later when the heath-flowers blend their royal purple with its regal hue. Many robins flitted across our path with a chirp of welcome as we proceeded, and having a piece of bread in my pocket, I crumbled it up and let Hal throw the food to the dear birds as we passed. The white snow was on the ground, and a hard frost had made it fine walking; but it was very cold for the robins, spite of their warm feathers and their ruddy breasts, which, together with the holly berries, were in such marked and beautiful contrast with the pure white snow. Being arrived at Tiddeybrook, we found the great hall very full of guests; but no sooner did Cicely espy me, than she advanced to meet me, with a sweet smile upon her lips, and outstretched hands.

"Dear Friar Hildebrand, I am right glad thou art come; I do thank thee so much for coming; I began to fear thou wouldest *never* come to us again at all"; her voice dropped, and the smile faded as she spoke these last words.

"Thou art mistaken then, my dear child," I answered, as gaily as I could, for I felt my face

flush, and my hands tremble as I took hers; "here I am once more amongst you, and wish you all a merry Christmas."

I was surrounded now by old and young, and kindly words were exchanged; and very soon I so entered into their spirit of mirth and frolic that I forgot altogether to be sad. And indeed it would be impossible almost for him who witnessed these quaint Christmas diversions of ours in merry England to preserve a very grave face, even though he may have a somewhat dull heart underneath. First of all I may mention the beautiful adornments of the hall, which I never saw look prettier, for neither the holly nor mistletoe had been spared, and with these were mingled laurel leaves, and graceful festoons of ivy, which greatly enlivened the place. Upon the hearth there burned the great yule log, which had been brought into the house on the Christmas Eve, as Hal informed me, with no small mirth and fun, and now the children were busy handing round amongst each other the yule dough, and they brought their cakes in abundance to me, that I might pass my judgment

upon them; Cicely had fashioned these little images of the Virgin and her Divine Son, the Infant Christ, in sweetened paste—as the bakers do in the large towns of this kingdom to present to their customers—and given one to every child guest at the farm, a source of great delight to them.

And almost the first business after I arrived was the Christmas dinner, a sumptuous repast indeed, for first of all there was brought in the boar's head, placed upon a capacious dish, and ornamented with sprigs of bay and rosemary, preceded by drummers, trumpeters, and fifers, with much noise, whereat we all stood up, while Walter Hawley chanted the verses in its praise, and we all joined in the chorus, with, I am afraid, more noise than melody, for already the tankards of nut-brown ale began to be freely emptied, a circumstance which never tends to sweeten men's voices. This was our song, a somewhat pretentious one, and more abounding in Latin phrases than the serving-men and farm labourers could rightly interpret:—

"The bore's head in hande bring I,
With garlands gay and rosemary;
I pray you all synge merrily,
Qui estis in convivio.

The bore's head, I understande,
Is the chiefe in the lande.
Looke wherever it be fande,
Servite cum cantico.

Be gladde, Lords, both mon and lasse,
For this hath ordayned our stewarde
To chere you all this Christmasse,
The bore's head with mustarde.'*

After this song, when we were all seated, ample justice was done to the boar's head, and to the capons, kids, beef, geese, hare, and ham, as well as the venison pasties, mince-pies, junkets, custards, cream, and apple jellies, for which Cicely and her mother are more especially famed. Nor did her father spare his ale and cyder, so that there was somewhat more of drunken revelry than I could well tolerate; and after the repast the wassail-bowl was prepared with just as much ado as the boar's head had been brought in, and being decorated with ribands, was handed round

* "Christmas Carolles." Published by Wynkyn de Worde, 1521.

the company by two of the prettiest maidens present, who sang the while verses in its honour, made sweet by their pleasant voices; and so paused before each guest and offered it to him to drink. I partook of it very sparingly indeed, merely raising the bowl to my lips for a sip, as an example to my flock, and because that there are many customs which, as I conceive, are better omitted at like festivals—drinking much of such liquors being one. For it appears to me altogether unseemly that on the day wherein we ought to rejoice, for that higher and more exalted life of which Christ came to give us the ensample, we should, instead of imitating Him, lower ourselves by drunkenness to the condition of the very beasts that perish.

After a while the room was cleared of much of the good cheer, there being left upon the table a great abundance of nuts, apples, and various drinks, together with some small cakes, and presently the table itself was drawn close back against the wall, and the elders gathered around the fire, whereon the yule log crackled and glowed in genial sympathy with the holyday

mirth of the company. And then, the space being made sufficiently large, the masquerading began, and now Cicely came to me, and whispered, "Friar Hildebrand, we want thy good counsel in our various matters; and canst thou act a part?"

"Ah, truly," thought I, "my sweet Cicely, I am constrained to act a part every day of my life."

So I went with her into an adjoining room, where the young folk were gathered, and where there were much noise and laughter. And this was the manner of our mummery. First of all, we appointed a suitable Lord of Misrule, that he might take chief pains and concern in the manner of our diversion, and next we decided to enact the legend of St. George and the Dragon, Cicely taking with much grace the part of the fair Sabœa, the daughter of the King of Egypt, captured by the ferocious dragon, and rescued by St. George, who was no other than Walter Hawley, grotesquely armed with helmet, lance, and other warlike appurtenances. The children amused themselves by entering into

divers devices made of buckram, in the shapes of different animals, and ran hither and thither, bellowing, barking, and neighing, so as to make what a true child ever delights in, unspeakable noise and confusion. A few of the fairest amongst the little girls were ingeniously dressed as angels, and hovered here and there with much grace amongst the motley crowd. Walter and Cicely both besought me to take the part of the doctor who restored St. George when he had been wounded by the dragon and lay at the point of death; and this, being most willing to please my dear child, I consented to do; so we came into the hall again, and went through our performance with much ado, receiving the applause of the older folks, and the unbounded delight and interest of all, as no small guerdon for our pains. After this there followed some dancing, and, I grieve to say, much drinking of the farmer's strong drinks, till some were laid about the floor, and others dragged to bed, a woful ending to a day of mirth, and, above all, to a Christian holyday. I noted with much anxiety the conduct of Walter Hawley in this particular,

and was well pleased to observe that he seemed to delight himself, when he needed refreshment, in tasting the condiments of Cicely's making, more than in quaffing the drinks that were so generally indulged in by the men, and even by many of the women of the party. Cicely came to me as I was about to leave.

"I am so glad thou camest to Tiddeybrook to-day, dear Friar Hildebrand," she said, laying her hand in mine, and gazing up into my face, "for this will be my last Christmas at home, and I could not bear that thou shouldest be absent from our merry-making."

I started as she spoke, and tried to answer her, but the words died upon my lips. I turned my face away from hers, that she might not read my trouble in my eyes. Even now I could not think calmly of that change in her life which would so much separate her from me, though it brought her to dwell nearer to me.

"So soon, Cicely?" I stammered out at last, still keeping my eyes away from her, and drawing my cowl over my head to encounter the cold night air.

"Yes, in the summer, dear Friar Hildebrand; Walter wills it so."

I lifted up my voice without further parley, and pronounced upon her the blessing of the Church, and so hastily left her, not trusting myself to speak longer with her. I noticed in her eyes that same look of troubled wonder that I had first marked upon Whitechurch Down, but I did not pause for another word, and quickly descended the hill, and in but a short time found myself within my cell again, with all the warm Christmas glow gone from my heart.

"What have I to do," thought I, "with family gatherings and gay masqueradings, women's smiles and children's laughter? Better if we begin to crucify our affections, to do it thoroughly and be not only monks but hermits, utterly separated from all the sweet amenities of life."

I gazed out of the window of my cell; the dark blue sky was bright with thousands of stars and a crescent moon; the river murmured and plashed over its rocky bed beneath my window as aforetime, and the words of the angels' song resounded through my chamber-

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." The bitterness (though not the sadness) passed away from my soul; God's glory, the world's peace, He hath made to flow from man's goodwill unto his fellow. Goodwill grudges not any happiness to him; goodwill is the action of the heart—not that mild speech of the tongue, not that mere outside politeness that may be blended all the time with deadly hatred. Goodwill means God's will, for God is goodness; God's will to man is shown in Christ, who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor"; "who tasted death for every man, bore our sins in His own body on the tree"; "died that we might live"; and so St. Paul but echoes the angels' song when he writes, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." This is "goodwill toward men," to rejoice in their happiness, to grieve in their trouble, to help carry their loads. Alas! my soul, hast thou not this day been envious of another's joy? didst thou not watch with a jealous eye those sweet, half-stolen kisses under the bough of mistletoe, and listen with

almost an angry ear to the love-tones of the young miller when he spoke to Cicely? Preach ever unto thyself, Friar Hildebrand, this homily that thou hast thought out under the quiet stars in thy lonely cell on Christmas Day, and remember ever that for thee God's glory, the earth's peace, depend upon thy cherishing goodwill toward men.

CICELY'S TROUBLE.

CHAPTER XIV.

CICELY'S TROUBLE.

JUNE 23rd, 1524.—It is almost a year and a half since I wrote last in this diary; the time has been passed by me in such anxious questionings, such dreamy doubts, such hard thoughts, that I was unwilling to put them to paper, knowing well how much all might be changed for me, when my heart came out of the struggle. I perused the King's book with great interest, and then read anxiously all I could obtain of the writings of Martin Luther, of whom it seems necessary, now that I have said so much, that I should add also somewhat more.

This is a bold monk of our own order, who hath dared to oppose in many things the will and commands of His Holiness Leo X.; who hath stigmatized all granting of indulgences as sin; who hath dared to insist that every man

and woman should think for themselves on religious matters, and that they are responsible for the beliefs of their soul to God alone. Also, he much insists on the Scriptures being given freely to the people, and descants against the excesses and immoralities of the monks. He has been daring enough to burn various pontifical documents, especially a Bull of the Pope's, and for these his many offences he has been excommunicated, and during the last year summoned to a Diet at Worms. In short, he is, though doubtless a man of much ability and boldness, a dangerous heretic, into whose snares I myself became somewhat entangled, for his books have a specious show of reason about them; but from which participation, in however small a degree, in this his heresy, I do hereby pronounce myself fairly and fully absolved, through the clemency of our Abbot, who has taken much pains with me in this matter, and shown me my errors, to my no small confusion and shame; from all which sin in the future of my life I cry, with sincerity of heart, "Good Lord, deliver me!"

There are other matters that have tried me sorely. In the late summer of last year, Cicely came from the Abbaye Farm to ask of me a favour, namely, that I would perform the marriage ceremony for herself and Walter Hawley. Surely the dear child has not possessed the quickness to guess my secret, as I once believed, or she has thought to cure me of my passion the more readily by feigning utter ignorance of it. Whichever it be, her request pained me so much that for a whole week I was in sore torment of soul; and then I could not decide but against her wishes, fearing lest some foolish show of uncontrollable, uncrucified emotion might render me liable to suspicion; which denial of her request caused a coldness that was very hard to bear to spring up in her hitherto tender and gentle manner towards me, and this embittered my life beyond what I could have believed possible, and brought back to me all that agony of heart which I had supposed myself to have escaped from. Once or twice I even thought I would yield to her desires, when that foolish fear of betraying myself to her

husband, and thereby perchance rendering her life a troubled one, again stayed me, and this time more resolutely.

So the marriage was celebrated, but I had no share in her joy, nor even in her thoughts, and no request to attend the wedding feast, but spent all that day and night in my oratory in troubled confessions to God, and in prayer.

September 10th, 1524.—That miserable bar of unfriendliness that existed for so many months between Cicely and myself has happily been withdrawn. In the weeks of sorrow and of trial that have latterly been her portion, I have been of service to her. How much pleasure the thought gives me! A month or so after I made my last entry in these pages, I learned that Walter Hawley had been stricken with a sore fever that was raging in these parts, and has even now great hold upon many of the poorer houses in Tavystoke; so I considered that now, at last, was an occasion in which I could safely offer myself for the assistance of Cicely; the better that I was somewhat practised in the physician's nostrums, and much familiarised by

long experience with all manner of diseases. Nor was I unused to nursing, it being my delight to minister, in some feeble likeness to our Divine Master, unto the bodies as well as the souls of His people. So I betook myself, armed with some valuable remedies, to the Abbaye Mills, where I found Cicely in very sore grief, and Walter stretched upon his bed of languishing. Cicely welcomed me kindly, but with some slight reserve, which melted away, as I could see by her expressive face, when I uttered the following: "My dear children, I am come to offer my best help to you in this your trouble. Cicely, my child, thou will let me nurse thy good husband for thee; thou knowest how well used I am to work of this kind."

Walter Hawley was, however, the first to answer me. "Good Friar Hildebrand," he said, "for all that thou canst spare my dear spouse, I shall most heartily thank thee; and if thou canst persuade her, which yet I much doubt, to keep away from me altogether, it would be for her safety."

Whereat Cicely drew near to the sick man's couch, and hiding her sweet, blushing face upon

his shoulder, declared very hotly, and with many tears, that she could not leave him, and that it would break her heart to be separated from her dear life.

"Thou art right, my dear child," said I soothingly; "thy plain duty is to stay by thy husband in his illness, and minister as far as thou canst to his wants; and yet is it equally thy duty to spare thy strength as much as may be; and since thou wilt have me to do for thee all that it is in my power to do, I beseech thee for his sake, and because of thy pleasant hopes for the future, to do nothing that can trouble him by injuring thee."

To all which Cicely was too glad to accede, for she expected, as she told me afterwards, that I should have sent her away from her home to her parents at Tiddeybrook, a decree of banishment which she could hardly have borne, and which I should have thought unwise.

So now, having first administered a cooling drink to my patient, I followed Cicely into her kitchen to learn all the symptoms he had yet manifested, as well as other particulars regarding

the growth of the disease; all which she readily confided to me, and then she said tenderly: "Dear Friar Hildebrand, I deserve not that thou should'st treat me so kindly, for I have been rough and discourteous to thee, because thou refusedst my request a year ago; and now thou riskest life for me and mine, as even my own folks will not." And her sweet face was crimsoned still with her emotion and her blushes.

I made answer: "I had better reasons than thou could'st guess, my dear child, for refusing thee; believe me, it is never pleasant to me to oppose thy wishes. But let us not think of these things; if thou hast forgiven the wilful disobedience of thy old friend in the matter referred to, be assured he thinks not of thy annoyance with any, even the slightest, disapproval."

For the next six weeks my place was at the Abbaye Mills, where, to the best of my knowledge and skill, I nursed Walter Hawley through his sharp and severe illness, and spared, in all things that I might and could, the strength of his

sweet young wife. And for some three days the stalwart miller's life hung in the balance, and our hearts were drawn very close into communion with the Saviour, who alone granteth life or death unto His children; and in those hours of extreme anguish Cicely's sweetness and strength of soul were alike manifest. I am not disappointed in my expectations of Cicely, for her heart is a brave heart, and she was never calmer or more ready to help her beloved one, by word and look and sign, than at that very time when her soul was most stricken for his sake.

Then came the rallying, the blessed return of the tide of health into the exhausted frame, the trembling step that tottered at first around the room so feebly, and then grew bolder, and attempted the mill garden, and next the Abbaye Green. Walter Hawley got well into his work again before I left him, or would consider my patient altogether out of my careful hands. And when I quitted the Mill House, Cicely's dear voice blessed me, while her soft eyes were full of glad tears, and I may not record, lest my vain

heart love too well to feed upon her praises, all the many kind words she spoke to me. Nor was Walter one whit less cordial in his hearty gratitude and sincere affection for me, who had, they both joined to say, "risked my life for his."

Dear Cicely, this, on my part, is but a selfish sacrifice. How could I be happy if thou wert sad? Life is a little thing, dearest one, to stake for thy comfort, thy peace. Thou knowest not how often I have said to myself, "I would willingly die for her." Thou knowest not, never wilt know now, Cicely, anything of the love I have borne thee these many years. Well, be it so; it has been sweet to me to have all the dear old confidence of the past renewed—to have thee regard me even as a fatherly friend.

MY NAMESAKE.

CHAPTER XV.

MY NAMESAKE.

ONLY a fortnight ago to-day I was sent for to the Abbaye Mills. Cicely's baby was born a week before, and she desired that I should baptize the infant. I acceded to this request of hers, and she had a pleasant surprise in store for me. When I had the little one in my arms and requested to know the name that had been chosen for him, it was Cicely's own voice, very low and sweet, that answered me from her couch—"Dear Friar Hildebrand, he is to bear thy own name, in token of our love and gratitude towards thee."

"What!—Hildebrand?" quoth I, half disbelieving my own ears for very joy.

"Yes—Hildebrand!" she answered, smiling; "it is a fine, well-sounding name, besides that to us, through thee, it is the symbol of all that is kind and good."

"We shall always esteem it a favour if thou grantest our boy thy name," said Walter Hawley heartily; "and I would he may grow up to be half as good, as Christlike, a man."

"Alas! my children, ye do misjudge me utterly in your benevolence," saith I, for I felt sorely humbled in spirit, more than they might believe, at these words. But I proceeded with the holy sacrament of baptism, and the little one became my namesake. It was a very pretty token of that affection which is in their hearts for me.

August 6th, 1525.—The last year has been a happy one to me. I have been a constant visitor at the Abbaye Mills; not a week passes without my entering to inquire after my boy Hildebrand. My brother monks laugh heartily at the interest the little one awakens in me. They do not know —how should they?—the tender link the child forms between the romance, the passion of my life, and my now subdued and softened and reverential love for his sweet mother. Nor how, as I watch in his opening charms the bold lineaments of his young father's handsome face, I rejoice that the friendship between him and myself is so true,

so heartfelt. And I am also interested strangely in the marvels God works in the baby form of my little namesake. There is a grand creative power constantly shown forth in every new babe which His Providence ushers into the world ; and there is something wondrously beautiful, surely, in the development of all these faculties of ours, while it is manifested marvellously how God has put an abundance of patience into the heart of every mother, that enables her to care and tend so lovingly and continuously for her child.

When I reflect that each man and woman I meet has had this need of being watched and guarded through all the feeble months of infancy, and that I myself experienced the like, my heart bounds with gratitude to my Maker, who has in His wisdom so blended the joy with the pain needed to nurse and to bring up children. Every new grace, every smile of the artless infant, has in it a reward for the fond mother's heart; she takes such pride in the growth of every limb, in the new-found strength of every muscle, in the lisping of every word, in the first tottering footsteps of the little feet ; and so babyhood passes

into childhood, and the future perfect manhood strengthens every day. My little Hildebrand, if ever thou forgettest thy duty to this sweet mother of thine, if ever thou ceasest to be good unto thy fond father, thou wilt richly deserve the curses of Heaven upon thee, for never saw I more tender nurture, more patient lovingness, manifested to any babe, than have been shown to thee. The little fellow already knows me well, and stretches out his small dimpled arms and fat hands to come to me, and hides his pretty little face upon my shoulder, and plays about my cowl.

"'Tis pity thou art a monk, Friar Hildebrand," Walter Hawley said playfully but yester eve when I was at the mill, and the boy was in my arms. "Pity thou art not the father of a good house full of young ones thyself; thou lovest the children so, and hast such a rare power of making them love thee."

Unconsciously I strained little Hildebrand so tightly to my heart when his father said this, that he made up his little mouth to cry, and was only comforted by his mother, who at once began to humour him, and then took him from me, with

a playful protest that his little shoe wanted to be tied. I went out then, abruptly enough, straight into the mill garden, where the great hollyhocks were in gorgeous array of bloom; where the sweet-briar roses scented the air deliciously; where the bees droned in delight at the abundance of sweets, and where the air was hot and heavy with the dark golden glory of the setting sunbeams of that warm, still, autumn evening. The chords of my unconquered love had been somewhat rudely played upon, and the string still jarred painfully. I strolled around once, twice, thrice, striving to subdue the torture of my soul, when the miller came out and joined me; I could see irresolution, unusual to him, upon his face, when I turned mine to him, and yet he tried to speak.

"Friar Hildebrand," said he at last, "I am a blunt, stupid fellow, and thou must pardon me; I never guessed until Cicely hath just now told me."

My face I felt grow colourless as I listened unto him. "Cicely?" I exclaimed, below my breath.

"Yes," said he, "Cicely telleth me I have

made a blunder; that thou hast had a good reason, as she believeth, for becoming a monk, good Friar, and that I have made but a rude, rough speech unto thee."

"What doth Cicely say more?" quoth I, feeling my brain grow giddy, and my steps unsteady, as I spoke these words.

"She saith," continued Walter, "that in thy youth thou hast loved, and that thou hast been unhappy in thy love, good Friar, and so thou didst abjure marriage for ever."

I gave a great sob, and sank down in a faint upon the ground, whereat Walter raised me, and brought me in his strong arms into the house again, and threw open my gown at the throat, and dashed water upon my face, and lifted the heavy iron cross and rosary from my neck; alas! no man, no woman ever may lift for me the heavier cross beneath. And when I came to myself again, Cicely was bending over me, with a face full of tender anxiety, and she pressed her soft cool hand upon my burning brow, and then she made me drink some of her simple medicine which she kept close at hand for sudden ailments.

So now I understand all, and Cicely knows, guesses nothing of that inward cross I wear daily, hourly for her sweet sake. She only thinks that some buried loves and joys, of which she hath reminded me, form the sorrow of my life. Perhaps this is best, perhaps it will make all things more easy both to her and to me, to leave this fancy uncontradicted. God knows. But it gives me some sore pain to feel that she may not even accept of the sacrifice I have laid upon the altar of her happiness.

THE STORY OF SQUIRE CHILDE OF PLYMSTOKE.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORY OF SQUIRE CHILDE OF PLYMSTOKE.

I HAVE been so busy of late with other matters, that I have had but little time to devote to the transcription and illumination of my manuscripts. I have spent less time than of yore in my cell dreaming amidst my paints and brushes, and mingled much more with my fellows, being especially interested and occupied with my children in the school, and my dear little namesake at the Abbaye Mills. But the manuscript on which I am now occupied arrests my attention. Let me carefully re-peruse it in order to choose the most appropriate subjects for my pictures:—

In the reign of Edward the Third of blessed memory, a great prince truly, and one that deserveth ever to be had in loving remembrance of all his subjects, there liveth at a noble mansion

in Plymstoke one Richard Childe, and forasmuch as divers strange adventures happened unto him during life, and unto his bodye after death, I have seen fit to write down all I know, and to state fairlie and fullie the meanes whereby our Abbaye obtaineth possession of his landes. And herein I would observe that there are many who accuse the friars of Tavystoke of great greedinesse and ill-nature, and who even assert that our Abbaye came not lawfullie by these his lands, but I am quite content to leave the whole matter unto the kind reader, who will be the best judge between us and our enemies, more especiallie the men of Plymstoke.

This Richard Childe, being left an orphan with a very goodlie estate just towards the mouth of the Plym, and close unto an excellent harbour, having the town of Sutton upon the opposite shore, and now being come unto mature age, marrieth. And the ladye upon whom he chose to confer the honour of his hand, and the goodlie riches of his estate was also, like unto himselfe, an orphan. But not so happilie placed as to possessions, in that she was, save for the rentes

of a petty farm, whereon she lived with her guardian, a pennilesse mayden. Yet had she two choice gifts in the eyes of Richard Childe, namelie, a sweet temper, and a very lovely face, so that her name, Amy, became her well, for that she was very trulie Aimée by her devoted lover. Now, if any reading this, doe wonder that I, Friar Henricus, a grave Augustinian, as my habit would suggest, should thus play upon a ladye's name, or trifle somewhat about these love matters, I would forewarn him to remember that we monks do learn many secrets in the Confessional, and that it becometh an historian to enter into the circumstances of his heroes and heroines. But to proceed: Richard Childe, being a hot wooer, and an ardent admirer of fair Amy's charms, and she having no proper home to stay in, being doubtlesse willing, he presentlie bringeth her unto Plymstoke, and for a season enjoyeth unto the full his home and his fair wife. But being a great hunter in the forest of Dartmoore, he sometimes leaveth her, to proceed thither with a troop of sportsmen, while she standeth in the pleasant park upon the terraced walk of her husband's

mansion, and watcheth their departure, and kisseth her pretty hand to her dear lord as he rideth away. For some happy months, near unto the space of a year, there cometh nothing to cloud this their great joy and peace, and there springeth up likewise the hope, dear unto both, that there would not be wanting unto them an heir to succeed unto so much comfort and to so large demesne, the which endeareth the sweet Amy yet more unto her tender spouse, who leaveth her more unwillinglie than ever, and returneth to her with more joy. Now it came to pass that the winter, into which the seasons had drawn round, was more than commonlie severe, and the abundance of wild animals in the forest greater than was wont, and Richard Childe proposeth to joyn a company of hunters for some excellent sport, and this he doeth the more readilie for that his young and well-beloved wife had expressed some desire for a daintie morselle of venison, and that of her husband's finding, for she believeth him to know better than any other the best deer and the best means of killing them and retaining the flavour of their meat. So with a very tender

parting, and meaninge to be back at eve, he setteth out upon the white landscape, for alreadye the winter snows had made their first descent upon the earth. The morning was fair and bright, with plenty of sunshine, but a very keen frost; and as he rode off, often looking back unto the window where stood the beautiful Amy, her sweet face close unto it, thereby to watch him the longer, the hoofs of his handsome horse rang out sharp upon the hard ground, and the boughs of his fine old trees sparkled as if there had been in the night a shower from heaven of all manner of fine jewels; for upon them there flashes the red tint of the ruby, the green of the emerald, the orange of the topaz, to say nothing of the diamonds which, as I may safelie say, every other frost-drop hath been transformed into. Amy admireth for a long while the beautie of nature from her pleasant window, and then turneth to the warmth of the great fire, and having chafed her hands thereat, taketh up her tapestrie frame and calleth for her maid Jennifer, who spinneth in an ante-room, and biddeth her bring her wheel, and so chatteth with her until noon.

But the day weareth away somewhat slowlie unto Amy, and she longs for her lord's return. The dark night descendeth swiftlie and earlie upon the world at that season in this our land, and the heart of the ladye grew sick and faint at the long tarriance of her husband, while all the household wondereth that he, who hath been so eager to return unto his ladye, now so long delayeth his coming. Hour after hour passeth, and suspense deepeneth into anxietie, and as the night waxes to its height anxietie is once more pushed out by a yet sterner foe to peace—dread. But Amy, tender and gentle as she is, hath yet a patient, much enduring heart; she hopeth the best, tryeth to believe that he taketh shelter in some shepherd's hut upon the bleak moorland, or in the depths of the forest, and striveth to sleep; but her slumbers are disturbed by troubled dreams. Morning breaketh, and the weary hours drag themselves slowlie by, and still Richard Childe cometh not. And now the brave heart of the young wife that had kept up so stronglie hitherto, giveth way grievouslie, for her weaknesse increaseth upon her, and the hour of her sore

trial draweth close at hand. Once more the evening shadows fall upon the white earth, and the clouds that had been gathering all day begin to fall softlie and incessantlie to the ground in the fast blinding snow.

And now all hope faileth the sweet ladye of Plymstoke, she giveth way unto despair.

"He might," saith she unto her maid, "have strayed too far to return unto his home last night, but now, Jennifer, that the elements are also against us, there seemeth no hope that I shall ever meet my own deare hearte againe."

"Alack-a-day! dear mistresse," answereth her faithful Jennifer, "do not suffer thyself to be thus distressed, my good master will no doubt come ere long; perhaps he hath alreadye entered upon his own domains, and then he careth nought, even for this thick snow, with thee his sweet wife and his dear home and a bright fire in view."

And Jennifer stirreth the wood into a blaze, and layeth on another handful to keep up the ruddie glow, that warmeth all the room, as it seemeth, by its deep red light. But through every hour of that second night of the Squire's absence,

his wife's agonie increaseth painfullie, notwithstanding all that Jennifer doth to comfort her.

"And do but bethink thee," she saith unto her maid, "that it was I who sent him forth upon this so lucklesse errand; that it was I who could not find a mouthful sweet enough to please my wilful fancy in all this fine house, and faire dairie, and bountifull larder he hath given me, but must endanger my dear heart's life for my so foolish whim?"

And with that she falleth to sobbing and crying, as if her heart would break, and Jennifer striveth, but in vain, to comfort her. So the sweete soul, every sad hour, wasteth more and more of the strength she soe much needed.

At break of day, being laid upon her uneasy couch, she cannot contend with her anguish, and life flickereth fast away in the sore struggle. At the moment that an infant's cry resoundeth in the quiet room, there is heard below the quick tramp of a horse's hoofs upon the soft snowy ground in the avenue, and presentlie they stop at the mansion of Plymstoke, and the master of the house flingeth himself, in haste, from his

saddle, shaketh the snow from his clothes, and entereth at the alreadye open door.

Doubtlesse he misseth the sweet face of his Amy; for his first question is of her, and the sad faces and low voices around him gave a spur unto his worst fears. He throws aside his wet garments, wrappeth himselfe speedilie in a loose coat that is brought unto him, and seeketh her chamber. There sitteth beside the sweet ladye, supporting her in her arms, the faithful Jennifer, and there lieth a baby hastilie swaddled, whose birth causeth but little joy, upon the nurse's knee. The pale face of the sweet young mother turneth a little at the sound of the opening door, and as she catcheth sight of him so long looked for, she stretcheth forth her arms eagerlie unto him, while a bright flush of crimson tint spreadeth the white, worn cheeks.

"My dear, dear love," she saith, panting for breath between each trembling word, and the Squire of Plymstoke draweth nigh gravelie, gentlie, and taketh the place that Jennifer withdraweth from. With all the might of his manhood, he forceth back the grief and sorrow and pain that

crush him to the earth, as he beholdeth her thus, and he only presseth his lips upon her sweet mouth, with whispered words of tendernesse. At this moment cometh a monk of the Abbaye of Plympton who liveth at an oratorie near by, and hath been sent for to shrive this precious soule, to give her the last sacrament and absolution; all which comfortable ordinances she receiveth calmly, and then turneth and layeth her wearie head upon her husband's breast, and whispereth, "I thought thou wast dead, dear love, and that fear hath killed me, I think. Hast thou seen our baby, my Richard, and art thou not well pleased with him?"

There was a faint smile now upon the gentle mouth. "Amy," saith the poor squire, with a great sob that he could not keep back, "the boy hath cost me too dear, but God knoweth how I love him for thy sweet sake."

"Bring him unto us, good dame," saith Amy unto the nurse—she becometh strangely calm for these last precious minutes of her young life—"and lay him soe upon his father's knees."

Then did both parents gaze down fondlie upon

the upturned but unconscious face of their child, and in the mother's eyes there was a love so strong and pure and tender, as if by that gaze she would instil into her child's heart an answering love for her, that should keep childhood and youth and manhood pure and true and good. Then she returneth to thoughts of her fond lord. "And where, then, hast thou been all this wearie while, dear heart?" she asked him; and he returneth, "I strayed far to light upon thy choice morsel, dearest—farther, much farther than I knew—and lost my way in the intricate turns of the forest, where I wandered for hours, cold and weary, and almost hopelesse; then cometh one of the rough shepherds of that region across my path, and unto him I offer my purse, if soe be that he will bring me to thy side againe, the which he cannot do, not knowing the paths sufficientlie, but leadeth me unto his old father, who guideth travellers, and even his own friends, through all that far-reaching forest, as if every path were drawn upon a map in his old brain. He bargaineth to come with me, as soon as the sun is up, and he brought me in safetie, until I once more recog-

nised the land, and knew my path, and only for this blinding snowstorm, which has set me again most woefully adrift, I should have reached thee several hours ago. I have brought thy venison, Amy." Amy's arms were entwined fondlie about his neck.

"I have been very weak—I might have had more patience, Richard; had I but done so thou mightest still have had both thy wife and thy son for many a long day."

Then softlie, with her husband's kisses on her lips, she sinketh to sleep—a quiet peaceful sleep; once she murmureth, and the Squire of Plymstoke bendeth down his ear to listen.

"I would have him called by thy name, dearest," she saith, with her eyes closed, and soe sleepeth againe. For an hour or two the watcher sat quite quietlie; the young mother lieth still as before, the babe lieth still upon the nurse's knee, and outside the window the white snow still falleth, falleth silentlie.

Then Jennifer gazeth down upon the face of her mistresse, and up into that of her master, and saith, in a broken voice, "She is gone, sir."

And the babe waketh, and crieth piteouslie, as if it knoweth the meaning of those sad words, and that it was motherlesse, and the nurse carrieth it from the chamber, while Jennifer repeateth to her master the tidings, "She hath gone, sir."

And the Squire looketh at her sternlie, with a stony eye, that cannot shed a tear, and turneth him and looketh upon the cold form in his arms, and seeth that the soft sweet beautie of the face groweth rigid in death, and that the hands he seeketh to clasp fall motionlesse upon the coverlid. And then he layeth her down, kisseth the icy lips, groaneth aloud, as Jacob did of old, "Oh, God! I am bereaved," and hurrieth away. It doth not become me to linger too long over this moving part of my story; the little baby, born amidst the snows of winter, seemeth unable to thrive, deprived of the soft warmth of its own mother's breast, although a good foster-mother seeketh to cherish it as her own, and ere the grave of Amy Childe hath been closed a week, the little one, robed in its death clothes, is given back unto her fond arms. And to Richard Childe it seemeth in his sorrow that the fair snow which still covereth

the earth is but its giant shroud; so much doth nature seem to mourn with him in his so great losse.

The months roll by, the seasons change, for neither man's griefs nor joys can hold back time in its flight, yet doth the sorrow of the Squire of Plymstoke still dwell livinglie in his heart; and no other woman that he meeteth taketh for him, in ever so small a measure, the place of his Amy, his beloved.

The snow shroud has melted from the face of nature; she hath been unwrapped from her grave clothes by the hands of the Almighty One, and rejoiceth in the glory of her resurrection, but on the heart of Richard Childe there still lie the cold chill of the grave, the snowy covering of the shroud. He busieth himself with his tenantry and his farms, and his grounds; yet he feeleth a chill misery at his heart, that no heir of his own flesh and blood shall ever reap the benefit of all his cares. A saddened but kindlie man doth the Squire ever seem, as the years roll on until that he hath become of middle age, and the good women tell their growing up daughters around

them of the faithfulnesse of his love unto his sweet lost Amy. And about this time he maketh his last will and testament, wherein he ordaineth that wherever he chanceth to be buried, unto that church shall his lands belong, perchance expecting that he should find sepulture where he would most like beside the bones of his so dearly loved wife, and their one and only child. And still his favourite amusement is that of hunting, and the wilder and more desolate the regions of Dartmoor into which he plungeth, the better it seemeth to suit his saddened heart. And he ever rideth on a well-appointed and handsome horse; and it was noted that about this time he had a very favourite steed, on which he lavisheth many caresses, and which he treateth almost as though it were endowed with reason: a faculty which, howbeit it may sometimes be difficult to understand in what way dumb animals know so much without it, yet is it altogether unscriptural (Balaam's ass alone to the contrary) to suppose they possess. Nevertheless I shall not enter herein into an argument of such vast magnitude, but proceed at once with my story of the Squire of Plymstoke.

The winter snows had once more fallen, when he rideth forth to hunt, along with four or five gentlemen of his neighbourhood, into the wilds of the neighbouring forest of Dartmoore, being mounted upon his favourite black steed, unto which he had given the cognomen of "Pride of Plymstoke." So now, having had some good sport, they separate somewhat from each other, in order to bring the wild animals more into their power; and being thus apart, the snow-clouds gather in the west, and the soft, flakey moisture commenceth to fall. For somewhile this, our hero, hath no fear whatever to chill his blood, and continueth his ride; but alas! when he trieth to rejoin his company, the snow blindeth him soe that he seeth nothing that is more than a yard or two ahead of him, and as the shadows of the evening fall likewise at this time, he soon discovereth himself to be lost. Now his only chance is to fall in, as he did before-time, with the hut of a shepherd; but in this hope, being altogether unfortunate, he feeleth a sad lonelinesse to oppress his spirit, and groweth sadder still, as he reflecteth that he runneth but small chance of decent sepulture, or that the

prayers of the Church shall be read over him, spite of that will of his which holdeth out such great reward to that place which should receive his ashes. So now, being unwilling to become the food of carrion bird or wild beast, doth he resort to a strange means of insuring what he desires, to the best of his power, and being greatlie benumbed with cold, he determineth to sacrifice the "Pride of Plymstoke" unto his sore need. Yet not without a pang doubtlesse doth he regard the gentle eyes of the poor animal, who is now much tamed down from his usual fieriness by these hours of cold and hunger, soe that it is as great mercy perchance unto the beast as unto himself to kill him, which he doth most speedilie and mercifullie, and then, disembowelling him, creepeth into his warm skin to somewhat recover himself from that fatal numbness that hath seized him—at least so far as to make this sentence which followeth, to call attention to and to confirm his alreadie made last will and testament; for pulling out a piece of parchment from his pocket, being a loose fragment that had surrounded a deed he had that day signed, he wrote thereon with the point of an

arrow, which he dippeth in the horse's blood, these words, taking care to sign them with sufficient accuracy to make all sure,—

> "He that finds and brings me to my tomb,
> The land of Plymstoke shall be his doom."

And these words, or near like unto them, I have myself seen graven on Crockern Tor, in the aforesaid forest, a place which is called by all the people for many miles around "Childe of Plymstoke's Tomb." But whether this last work hath been done by himself, which I conceive not possible, he being so benumbed, or by some other hand in commemoration of him, which is the more likely, I cannot certainlie say, howbeit thus they run with but little variation from the above,—

> "They first that find and bring me to my grave,
> My lands which are at Plymstoke then shall have."

The next person to pass by that way when the snows were somewhat abated findeth him thus, and hath the sad story as it were all pictured before him, which news, together with that of Childe's last will and testament, he being some-

what in the interest of the Abbaye of Tavystoke, doth speedilie acquaint the Abbot therewith, who sendeth forth at once some of his monks to bring the body for burial in the Abbaye Church of St. Mary and Renan with all speed, the which we do not doubt, could this poor gentleman have spoken, would have been much to his mind, inasmuch as all manner of prayers, masses, chants, and requiems would thus be his portion. But the inhabitants of Plymstoke, having gotten some knowledge that they might hereby lose the gentleman's lands, make all speed likewise. But because of the zeal of the monks for the honour and enrichment of our Abbaye and the glory of God, these doe arrive too late upon Dartmoore, and only in time to see in the distance a bier borne by several stout Augustinians, while only the dead horse remaineth to them for their so great paines; yet are there more men from Plymstoke covetous to possesse the body of Richard Childe, and yet more to gain his goodlie estate, which our Abbot hearing something of and how the neighbours of Childe seek to circumvent his plans, he causeth a slight bridge to be thrown across the Tavy,

where was no crossing hitherto, for the body to be taken over upon, lest some opposition to the passage of the said corpse should be met with at the Abbaye bridge, their accustomed way of transit. And this foresight of the Abbot was not by any means without occasion, for no sooner had the party arrived at Tavystoke, and set their feet upon the new bridge, than it was found there were alreadye planted at the old one a number of the Plymstoke men readye and willing to dispute the right of the monks to the dead man. But having alreadye won their prize by an excellent stratagem, and being now in their own lands, our black monks are no longer in fear of opposition, and not heeding the little crowd of the men of Plymstoke who gaze with troubled eyes across the Tavy at the unexpected procession along the Abbaye Green, nor even giving any invitation to them to attend the funeral obsequies of their departed worthy, for that it might lead unto a quarrel, the friars bear the bier straightway to the Abbaye church, where the body receiveth decent burial in a tomb alreadye prepared for that purpose, and a sufficient number of masses and requiems for

the soul of the departed are performed for the said Richard Childe even unto my day, in the which I have often joyned. His possessions were henceforth the property, as by his will ordained, of our most faire and excellent Abbaye, to the glory of God and the honour of the Virgin. And for that it was found an extremely convenient and well-appointed place whereat to erect a more durable bridge, the temporary wooden erection gave way for a suitable one of stone, which standeth unto this day, and beareth the name which the people of Plymstoke in their anger first gave unto that first structure, of Guile Bridge. And near unto it have been built in my time our substantial Abbaye mills, whereat lives my honest friend Bevil Hawley.

Now, in this matter of thus gaining the lands of Childe of Plymstoke, I understand not how any can account our Abbot and monks blameworthy, seeing they themselves doubtlesse would willinglie do the like, and that, perchance, for smaller gain, and also that the poore gentleman hath received that very good for the which he was willing to part with his domaines; and seeing also that it

advanceth God's glory, and the honour of the Holy Catholick Faith.

Here endeth ye story of Squire Childe, of Plymstoke, written by me, Friar Henricus, in the month of September, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 1400, being the first year of the reign of King Henry the Fourth.

STRANGE NEWS FROM GERMANY.

CHAPTER XVII.

STRANGE NEWS FROM GERMANY.

WHAT a quaint old story is this of Squire Childe! My brother monk, who wrote it, moves me to both smiles and tears as I peruse it—smiles at his smart casuistry—and yet methinks I do not so much blame our abbot and monks for their diligence in obtaining the body of the poor squire; only had there been no land belonging unto him, the charitable office of his sepulture would, I fancy, have been likely to be somewhat delayed, if not altogether neglected. My tears flow at the simple death scene of Amy Childe and her tender infant, and the sad loneliness of heart of her bereaved husband. Then his melancholy death in the forest; the icy chill that fastened itself upon him; the numbing touch of the keen north wind; the pitilessness of the driving snow; the last miserable resource; those gloomy moments of

thoroughly vivid consciousness within the fast cooling body of his favourite horse—all are before me. Poor Childe of Plymstoke, what a glad awakening after such a dread sleep must thine have been! What a change from chilling loneliness and misery to the glory and brightness of heaven, the company of angels, and the presence of God! How know I that thy Amy and your child were not the foremost of the glad throng to meet thee? There is busy work for my pencil amongst these scenes. There must be the Plymstoke mansion, with its owner riding forth to the hunt, and his lady, sweet Amy, on the terraced walk; there must be the hurried return of Richard Childe to the house of mourning and of death; there must be the finding of his frozen body many years after, close by Crockern Tor, and the monks crossing Guile Bridge with the bier; and the burial in the Abbaye church. I notice that Friar Henricus speaks of Bevil Hawley at the mills in his time; a direct ancestor of Walter Hawley, the husband of sweet Cicely.

October 8th, 1525.—This day I proceeded to the Hospital of St. George, in the West-street of

the town of Tavystoke, to shrive the soul of one of its inmates about to pass into the unknown regions of eternity. This was a poor, homeless old man, the last, he telleth me, of his once numerous family. He was full of strange fears about the horrors of purgatory, "which," said he, "I richly deserve to feel, having been a bad man in my time"; whereon he counted up his sins so fast, and pulled at my rosary the while, that he hardly gave me space to recommend him to the Divine mercy, through Christ, in which I told him there was more hope for him than in that reckoning of his sins; yet was the poor departing soul wondrously comforted when I promised him a goodly number of masses, which I will take care faithfully to perform.

This hospital was built in the reign of King Richard II., above a hundred years ago, by one of the Tremain family, and likewise endowed by them; and the doing of this good deed has in no wise tended to their impoverishment; for never, I suppose, did they flourish more in these parts than at this day, when in their goodly mansion of Cullacombe there live the Squire Thomas, his

wife Philippa, daughter to Roger Grenvile, of Stow, together with their eight sons, and as many fair daughters; amongst which sons are to be reckoned two pairs of twins; namely, Richard and John, and Nicholas and Andrew, which pairs follow next unto each other in order of age. And it has been to me ever a comely sight to behold the kindly squire and his buxom dame, followed by their numerous progeny of sixteen souls, enter in a procession at the open church door, and worship God together. Being of pious ancestry, they have likewise the privilege, obtained in the year 1448 from the Bishop of Exon, by, I think, our squire's great grandfather, of worshipping God in their own house at Cullacombe, which private chapel has been enriched by them with two well painted windows, whereon their arms are impaled, one of which windows has been made at Siddenham Dammeral, and the other at Kelly. In which chapel I have been called upon divers times to perform mass, at which there has always attended, with much decorum, the members of the family, together with all the servants, both upper and lower, so that of itself this mansion furnishes

a considerable congregation for the worship of God.

Often of late I have wandered from our Abbaye into our adjoining parishes and oratories, being minded to do somewhat in the work whereunto our blessed Master called His disciples of evangelizing the earth. Amongst the rough inhabitants of the forest of Dartmoor, and the but half-civilized countrymen of the neighbourhood, I have striven to set up the standard of the cross, and proclaim the evangel of Christ. More especially have I roamed, being on foot and without any guide, to Lydford, a town of considerable size so far back as the reign of Edward the Confessor, or even further; and to St. Mary Tavy, and St. Peter Tavy, each of which has a good church built of granite stone; and where, from the crosses that stand near unto, I proclaimed my message to the listening throng. Then afterwards did we enter each church, where I celebrated mass, and comforted the pious souls of many good Catholics by the rites of absolution and confession. And for these matters, and for these services above and beyond the ordinary weekly mass, I have

obtained a special order from my abbot, permitting me the use of the churches for prayer and celebration of the Host. Also I have frequented the oratory at Tavy Town, where there come worshippers from the hamlet of Whitechurch; and in these labours my soul finds much quiet and peace, and the restlessness and weariness of my heart are somewhat stilled and softened.

November 19th, 1525. — I have given myself continuously to works of activity rather than to hours of meditation of late, because I find the former leave me the less time for selfish thoughts and conceits that have my own trials for their subject. I still find, in the happy home of Walter Hawley and Cicely, relaxation and comfort and joy. And dear Cicely herself increases in sweetness and purity and love. No nun in the most strict convent can be more dedicated to her God than is Cicely in the midst of her home, in which she unfolds day by day the tender charities of Christ.

Is the heretic, Martin Luther, right in this one particular, that we do most heartily honour God by glorifying Him in sweet ministrations of love

to each other, and in the home life that he has ordained? A wild tumult has swept over my soul, which sends me to relieve my full heart in this my diary, wherein how often I have vented out my troubles, that otherwise must needs have oppressed me still more sorely. This daring, bold man has these last few years preached this amongst other heresies, that there is no manner of grace or favour in the eyes of God in the compulsory celibacy of the priests. Here have I written heresy, and yet methinks—well, shall I not dare even to write my thoughts in this my own book, which is so particular to my eyes alone? Yes, I will dare; I do believe that herein Martin Luther *is* right; not because it has cost me my Cicely to believe the contrary; not because I have sorely suffered in the flesh regarding this very thing; but because I have sought—God knows how honestly I have sought—by the open page of my Bible, for the proof of the purity of the Church's dogma on this very point; and I have found that there was no forbiddance of marriage, neither by God's Spirit nor in His revealed law, to the priests in the Old Dispensation; no,

nor by the mouth of the Holy One, when on earth, to His disciples whom He sent to preach the Gospel to every creature. But, on the contrary, St. Peter, the great head of our Church next to the Son of God Himself, was a married man, and St. Paul also writes to Timothy with reprobation of those who should forbid others to marry, as if they had received a revelation unto this effect. Now all these things, as well as the natural feelings of my heart to Cicely, which I could never conceive to be wrong, save on account of those vows which I had taken, made me the more attentively give heed to the arguments of this strong-willed heretic on this particular; for I do conceive it to be a gross fault of our human nature, that because we find a man to be guilty of wrong in some one matter, we do therefore judge him to be wrong in all, which test, if we ourselves were judged thereby, would not leave any one of us much chance of reformation or improvement. However, now to my matter of the tidings which have this day reached and so much moved me. Martin Luther has espoused openly, in full day, the escaped nun, Katherine

Von Bora, who hath already for some time renounced her vows, as he has done his, and has had much sympathy with him in his daring work against our Church. Has he sinned in this? The condemnation of the whole Church is upon him; many of our monks here at this quiet Abbaye, whose lives, without being wanting in Christian charity, I may dare to affirm are not half so pure and self-denying as his, loudly declaim against his scandalous conduct and his broken vows. Oh! my God, do Thou enlighten me in this and every other matter, for it seems to me a far better and more righteous thing to marry a woman honestly than to act treacherously towards her; to win her confidence in the Confessional, and then spoil her innocence as Martin Luther accuses the monks of doing!—and too often, as Thou knowest, his accusation is just. If this order and command of the Church, this yoke that is so hard for us to bear, that all the religious shall be celibates, be a man-made ordinance, oh! God, do Thou help Martin Luther in this particular, if in no other, to overthrow and annihilate it! What have I written? I tremble and am aghast at my own

boldness. Is there something infectious in the frank courage and open-hearted sincerity of this German that I am imbued therewith, as I think of him and his Katherine? What if I had been as bold? What if I had leaped this fence of custom and solemn vows and told Cicely of my love; told her on that bright May morning when the soft spring bloom was on the trees and the lark's song in the sky; when the sweet child had never yet listened to the whispers of love or heard the soft vows of a true heart? What if I had won her for my own? What if I had gazed into the blue mirror of her eyes, and seen my happy self reflected therein, as my image was graven upon her heart, and felt my pulses bound the while with gratitude to the good Giver of so much happiness? The thought of such delirious joy, such wild delight intoxicates me even now. Oh! Cicely, alack-a-day, the cold grey of the November sky, the dreary patter of the November rain, and the dull murmur of the Tavy outside my cell, seem the fitting accompaniments of my life without thee; as is the joyous spring, with its blue sky, and its fleeting clouds, and its soft gales, of what my life

would have been with thee. My heart strives so hard to be satisfied with my November-tinted life, and to rejoice honestly in the flower-hued lives of others, and yet all the while I know there is a yearning, that cannot be repressed, for something of the glory and the brightness in it, that I once dreamed of.

So have I written, as if this life were all we had; as if there were no joys, no rainbow hues, purer and fairer than aught we hope for here, to come to the soul that waits and longs for that higher good which God prepares. My soul, content thyself; accustom thyself unto a dull life on earth, for to such heaven appears all the more intensely beautiful; the difference here between the gay and the sorrowful is more than balanced by the fulness of joy hereafter; grey will melt into gold; blackness be swallowed up of intense light, and every sorrow and trial that thou bearest meekly and patiently here, will crown thy brow with a lustrous jewel when thou reachest the kingdom, and dwellest in one of thy Father's "many mansions."

At this moment the rain hath ceased, and a

pale gleam of wintry sunshine sweeps into my cell, and lights up my Parian marble Christ upon the cross, and tinges the St. Cecilia picture that is the very impersonation of my Cicely in her first bloom of womanhood. Dear Lord, how dare I murmur thus, cries my weak soul, grown stronger by the contemplation of His Divine love, and His brave, quiet courage in all His sore sufferings for us—how dare I murmur when Thou hast borne so much, and I so little; when Thy life was so sad, and Thou so patient—and mine is bestrewed with joys that I deserve not? Let me but fit myself, by every sorrow, to draw near and whisper comfort unto grieved hearts; let me but love Thee more in my every trouble; approach closer and closer unto Thee, and I shall one day be able to rejoice that my life has had so many dark tints in its sky and that the cloud has so often gathered over its sun.

A BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY AND A ROYAL MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY AND A ROYAL MARRIAGE.

APRIL 20th, 1529.—I have never mentioned yet in this diary Cicely's second child, the little Cicely: a fair little babe she is with blue eyes, like her mother's; a shy, winsome creature, who comes to me only now and then, and often hides her little face away from me, or drolly and demurely offers her mouth for me to kiss; who manifests so early in her career the prettinesses of the woman nature that has such power to influence men for good or ill.

Hildebrand has now grown to be a fine boy of five—an engaging age, for he prattles to me abundantly of all he has seen and done.

This being the third birthday of little Cicely, I went to the Abbaye mills to spend great part of the day, and enjoyed much peace and pleasure in the delight of the little ones. There was abun-

dance of romping with the dear boy Hildebrand, the little maiden Cicely, and a large party of their young cousins, in which I took a very active share; it may be somewhat undignified in a grave Augustinian—one who feels himself to have attained to mature age—to scamper wildly across the meadow, golden with buttercups, with my little favourites upon each shoulder, and truly, the solemn old cow, which chews her cud leisurely therein, looked at me with something of wonder in her calm great eyes, as if reproaching me for my idle gaiety. But I could not heed her; I could not resist the sunshine and the children's laughter, and the spirit of fun that entered into me this day, and I tired myself with play, like the veriest school-boy amongst them. And then I threw myself upon the golden couch Dame Nature had supplied us with, all spangled with silver daisies, and set to work making balls for the babies with the fair flowers, the while the little ones crowed and cooed, and crawled around and about me, and the bigger boys and girls gathered the blossoms, singing as they went from flower to flower.

"Harkee, little ones—hear ye aught?" said I,

with uplifted hands, and my half-finished flower-balls in my lap. And silence fell upon us all, saving the dear babe that Cicely carried in her kind arms, who crowed lustily, as if we waited for his voice.

"Hush, pretty one," she whispered, and softly kissed his open mouth; and then came the glad musical note of the cuckoo out upon the balmy air of spring, and the children fell to shouting with joy, and then to mocking him, and cries of "cuckoo!" "cuckoo!" resounded on every hand. And then we crowned little Cicely with flowers, sweet violets and daisies, enwoven with some blue ribbons, and so off again to more play and fun in the broad meadow, till the dear mother's call summoned us to the birthday feast. Walter Hawley took his little Cicely in his arms, and I led Hildebrand, and one after another the merrie youngsters trooped in after us. I had carved for the little birthday Queen a rosary and cross of fine holly wood, which was hung now around her plump, white little neck, for she was very proud of her new treasure, and kissed me for it, with such sweetness and pretty artlessness as repaid me a

dozen times for the small labour I was at in the matter.

January 2nd, 1530.—Public matters have much engrossed our minds of late. It seems difficult to many, rightly to judge of the conduct of our king, Henry VIII. He has—so say his enemies—resolved to marry one Anna Boleyn, maid of honour to his queen, Katherine, and so seeks occasion to divorce the latter. This business has been now already a long time in hand. King Hal does not believe that he had any right to have wedded Katherine, she being already widow of his dead brother Arthur; but the Pope takes a contrary view, Cardinal Wolsey seconding him, who has tried various means, but all to no purpose, to disaffect the king's mind against the Lady Anna Boleyn. There is one Thomas Cranmer, a man reputed skilful in judgment and learned in Church law, who upholds the king in this matter, and has therefore been greatly received into favour. Now how all this may end, and what concern we may any of us have in the ending, it seems difficult to me to foresee.

December 16th, 1530.—The Cardinal is dead, and

a most grievous death did he die, being stripped of his honours and deserted of the king, all which treatment he did declare before his close resulted from his unwillingness to please King Hal against his conscience in the matter of the Lady Anna Boleyn.

The manner of his death and his last words deserve remembrance by me, lest I too may ever be tempted to risk any portion of my soul's peace for ever so much of temporal prosperity. Being cited to appear at London on a charge of high treason, his health failed him on the journey thither; and he took shelter at the Abbey of Leicester, and retreated to the bed from which he never more should rise; whereon, a little before he expired, he uttered these sentences, "If I had served God as diligently as I have done the king, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs. But this is my just reward that I must receive for not regarding my service to God, but only to satisfy the king's pleasure."

November 11th, 1533.—The royal marriage, which has cost so much pains and so many heart-burnings has been solemnized. Queen Katherine

has gone into retirement, and Anna Boleyn shares the throne of King Hal. Cranmer grows daily in power, and has been made Archbishop of Canterbury. Our new Abbot, John Penryn, has grave doubts in these matters; the king throws off, as it seems carelessly, the power of the Pope, and takes upon himself the management of Church matters, and even declares his own authority over all Church property, as well the monasteries as the churches. This day I visited, as has been my wont these many years, the Leper House adjoining our oratory of St. Mary Magdalene, to comfort and solace the poor sufferers therein. This has ever seemed to me a blessed work, though one that tries the heart and makes me long for the power to say to these afflicted ones, as Christ said of old unto the leper who besought His aid, "I will, be thou clean." For this disease, which so much abounds amongst us, though not of so deadly and infectious a nature as in the East, has yet somewhat of a loathsome and horrible character, and separates here, as elsewhere, a man from his fellows in no small degree. The gratitude of these poor creatures to me is most touch-

ing to witness, and I think they like my coming the better in that I try to take to them somewhat of the doings of the great world outside the hospital, and inform myself of the state of their families and friends for their benefit, as well as administer the consolations of religion. In this I think I do no wrong, for it is God's holy will that man should take an interest in all worldly as well as heavenly matters, and it endangers our soul's welfare to neglect either, only he must strive to set things in their places, and to put those of the greatest magnitude in the highest room, to be first attended to.

February 12th, 1534.—It is as well to confess it to myself. My own mind has been terribly disquieted of late. I had not realized to what lengths my sense of the fairness that is due to every man, even to an opponent, had led me, in regard to Martin Luther, until, in a conversation amongst the rest of our monks, Brother Nicholas remarked to me in an undertone, "I much fear, Friar Hildebrand, that thou art thyself somewhat attainted with these heresies. I do well remember that thou from the first would'st never blame that rank

apostate, Martin Luther, as he deserved to be blamed, and in an especial manner for his scandalous conduct in marrying that poor, weak, misguided nun, Katherine. And thou hast even dared to call in question the Holy Father's wisdom in raising money for his many noble purposes in Rome, by the sale of indulgences. I have no wish to blame thee, my brother, but I much fear thou wilt have torment in thy own soul for thinking and speaking evil of dignities; and I advise thee both to amend thy thoughts and control thy tongue."

Tormented in my own soul! There thou art right, Friar Nicholas! The battle has begun. Why cannot I be content to accept the faith of my father because it *is* my father's, and without any questioning, as my brethren do in this Abbaye? How is it that the very air I breathe seems alive and laden with great and searching thoughts and doubts and new ideas which I cannot stifle? Be honest, my heart, and confess at least to thyself and to thy God I would not stifle them if I could. It is as if a fresh breeze had swept across the German Ocean to our shores,

and stirred our very souls. Men in the world are thinking and moving. Monks in the monasteries are thinking, but alas! not moving. Oh! for the noble courage of the heretic monk! Do not I believe, even as he believes, that the human soul cannot be held in leash by its brother man; that the priest has no heavenly right to control the life of the layman; that the layman is as close to God as the priest; and Christ the only Mediator between God and man? What do I fear? Expulsion from this fair Abbaye, the dear home of so many momentous years; the scorn of my brother monks; the opprobrious names of heretic and traitor to religion? I do dread all these. I shrink from acting in open opposition to all those I love and reverence, from being the despised pervert, where I have been, I may say it with all humility, since I know how soon the titles would be changed, the "honoured teacher" the "beloved dreamer."

And how should I answer it to my own conscience if I wilfully break the vows that bind me, and which I took upon myself? "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not"—

Doth not God's blessing rest upon that man? And yet, dare we wilfully blind our eyes to the golden sunlight, and call it darkness? Dare we open our eyes in the clouds, and say there is light?

THE HERMIT OF THE TAVY.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HERMIT OF THE TAVY.

JULY 12th, 1534.—There are strange rumours afloat. It is said the king desires to suppress the monasteries, but this I cannot believe; the very thought of it has sufficed to disturb me greatly. I went, after vespers, to discourse thereupon with our hermit Paolo. He was grave and somewhat unwilling, as it appeared, to express any opinion. Whilst we talked, I asked him that which I have so long desired—that he would confide to me somewhat of his history.

"My history!" quoth he, "ah! truly, my brother, there is but little in my history, save the unruly doings of an unruly heart."

"Yet would I fain hear it, Father Paolo, so perchance should I find myself strengthened to bear the more patiently whatever ills may have crossed my own path."

He looked keenly at me with his dark grey eyes, which shine all the more large and plain from the great leanness of his flesh, which sore mortification and much fasting have wrought.

"Thou shalt know it, Friar Hildebrand," saith he, softly, and even tenderly; "but every man hath his own cross to bear in this nether world, and for each of us who desireth to tread in the footsteps of our Master, Christ, there is a *via dolorosa* up which we must carry it. Now is it late. Away, brother, away to thy cell, and leave me in peace unto my penance and my slumber and my prayers. Come to me in the morning, and I will recount unto thee my past."

So I left him with his blessing, and shall not fail to be with him in the morning.

July 13th, 1534.—A sad event has occurred this day, which brings me so soon again unto this book. I went to have my desire fulfilled, of knowing the history of our hermit Paolo, as he promised to tell it to me this morning. So, at an early hour, being immediately after matins, I crossed the Abbaye Bridge with this intent, and proceeded along the south bank of the river, unto the little

chapel of St. John, whence, having there said my orisons amongst the singing of the wild birds in the woods outside, I proceeded unto the Hermitage. The old man lay stretched upon his bed of ferns. "Friar Paolo!" I called softly, as I stood at the entrance of the cave; but he did not answer me. I proceeded within. "He sleepeth soundly," said I to myself, as I drew near. The tangled beard, the matted hair, the unwashed, tattered garments were before me now, but the haggard face was very pale; and when I touched the lean hand that lay on his rusty gown, it startled me—it was so icy cold. The morning was so bright and warm without, that the sunshine even penetrated within the cave, through the thick bushes at its entrance; but it could not warm the form that death had touched, for our old hermit had indeed laid himself down to die. All the secrets of his life, thought I, are gone with him into the unknown world beyond the grave. Poor Paolo! I have blamed thy dirtiness, have censured thy strangeness, thy hiding of thy great talents in the earth—but how know I that I could judge thee aright? I lifted reverently the iron cross from

his breast, and thought of his solemn words to me last evening, touching the *via dolorosa;* and as I was about to fold his robe decently about his stiffened limbs, I caught the gleam of a miniature frame beneath the dead man's dress, and, opening it, beheld lying there, on the cold, still heart, the beautiful face of a woman—not a woman like my St. Cecilia in her first bloom, but a woman chastened, softened, sweetened, purified by a sorrowful life, with just a sparkle of the old playfulness of her youth still dimpling the tender lips, and gleaming out of the gentle eyes. Had I come sooner, Paolo, should I have known all—thy romance, thy love, thy cross? It is a strange thing that man meeteth and crosseth his fellow on life's journey, and transacteth business, and worshippeth and talketh with him, and all the while hideth his soul and his heart from the other's gaze and knowledge. Poor Paolo! The miniature is framed in gold and pearls, some of which are lost, and it gleamed in the summer sunshine. But that sweet woman, where is she? what is her history? Did she love thee, Paolo, or didst thou love and worship her beauty all unknown to her? And have you met,

ere this, in the eternity which is before every one of us? Dear Paolo, all thy faults are forgotten in the light this miniature flashes upon thy solitary life. Thou too hast suffered keenly; thou too hast borne the secret cross upon thy heart. And what matters it if, when I die, kind hands performing their last good offices for me shall find a little curl of gold upon my breast that matches Cicely's hair? Will they displace it? Will they not reverently, as I do now with this fair likeness, lay it back again, and thank God that for one more struggling, loving soul, the struggle is over, and the love all around him, his new, sweet atmosphere. So, Paolo, with one more glance at thy beloved one, one more look at the tender, saintly woman, whose memory was perchance thy guiding star upon the earth, I lay her image back upon the heart that once throbbed wildly at her approach, her glance, her smile, her touch, her voice (as I do even now at Cicely's), but which receiveth her to-day so quietly, with not one pulse of emotion. I cannot do more for thee, poor hermit, with thy unspoken story of anguish, thy unwritten romance, than to see that the shroud shall not

disturb thy love. Hath any one ever dreamed of the life-histories that must find room amongst eight hundred monks? Hath any one ever conceived that there exist so much of poetry and passion beneath the black robes of the Augustinians in the quiet Devonshire Abbaye of Tavystoke? Stop—what is this? A name—her name, in small, fair characters upon the back: a woman's hand, surely a woman's hand! Paolo's caligraphy was broad, bold, gigantesque—not this fine, delicate tracery. And in English, too! Methought it was an English face upon the ivory.

Egeline Copplestone,
1500.

Sweet Egeline! I am as curious as a woman to know thy history, but the veil of death hides all from my view, and teaches me to hide also, as much as may be from other eyes, this, that accident hath revealed to me.

July 20th, 1534.—As for a brother beloved, I have done all the last offices for poor Paolo; which I believe he would have so well liked that I should do. There was a great soul in this poor body

that we have to-day committed unto the dust, with all the funeral pomp of our Church. Often have I sat, as I have sat in solitude this day, for hours on the soft grass outside of his mean abode, talking with him of the mysteries of faith, or listening to his eloquent and burning words. He has been lowered into the grave, in his grave-clothes, with Egeline's likeness on his breast, and the rosary and iron cross outside ; and none know, save myself, of the hermit's treasure ; unless Egeline, indeed, be yet alive. And if she be, will she discover his death ? And does she know that he possessed this treasured miniature ? What an idle questioner I have become ; it would be more seemly, perchance, to bury the whole matter in Paolo's grave.

October 8th, 1535.—How soon one takes the place of another in this world, and of how little real moment it is to most of us, who occupies this or that position ! The Hermitage has already had these many months another occupant, Friar Francisco, a dark, haughty Italian, in whose face lurks treachery, and with whom my soul has nought in common. I would not willingly mis-

judge any man, and above all a brother of the Abbaye, but he does unpleasantly remind me of the brigands I have met with amongst the wilds of the Campagna, and in the fair woods of Sicily. But if he has once been such as these, yet may he have truly repented. I desire not to judge my fellow. Still, there has come an end to my talks in the Hermitage; and my lazy meditations as I lay extended on the soft, short turf outside, under the waving boughs of the goodly oak tree, with the low muttering of indulgent old Paolo at his prayers within.

A MORNING WALK.

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CHAPTER XX.

A MORNING WALK.

OCTOBER 12th, 1535.—This morning, bright and early, I went to the Abbaye Mills for my companions in my walk, and found not less than three, all willing and glad to accompany me. These were my dear boy Hildebrand, now grown into a fine lad; his sister Cicely, a blooming, merry girl; and Walter, aged eight. At the Abbaye Mills there is no lack of mirthful faces and cheerful voices, and a happier, dearer home surely there never was provided for children to flock into.

Cicely, my Cicely, as my true heart ever calls her, is as an angel unto these little ones; she reproves but seldom, and then so tenderly, that it seems to the sorrow-stricken child his greatest grief that he hath wounded her; and spite of her six goodly, healthy children, and all the household cares a family so large involves—spite too of the one dear crippled little one who lies so patiently

a daily martyr to God upon his small couch, and shares so tenderly in his mother's thoughts and acts—she has ever a ready hand, and an open hand withal, to assist the poor and needy, to comfort the sick, and an attentive ear for the business cares of her husband, or the troubles of a friend. It becomes me to wonder how one so young, so fair, has so much wisdom ; and ever the answer comes to my heart, that she who meekly sits at Christ's feet, as Cicely does, shall be taught of Him.

And now behold me, surrounded with my three beloved children, off into the favourite old haunt, Whitechurch Down, talking busily and almost incessantly by the way ; for our intercourse is so close and friendly, that we have always, as it appears, more to say to each other than can well be managed in a given time. Cicely clings unto my hand, likewise little Walter, while Hildebrand sports hither and thither before and around us, here running up a bank, anon climbing a tree, but ever ready to mingle in our converse. The morning is as beautiful and bright as an autumn morning can be : the air sparkles with a light frost,

the flashing dew-drops dance and glitter in the sun, the turf is brown and crisp beneath our tread, the purple heath flowers and golden furze are seen through the transparent, silver, shimmering network of the frost, the black spiders hang heavily in their webs of jewelled gossamer, the larks soar up into the sunshine and the blue sky, and there is not a cloud to be seen; while over the distant tors of Dartmoor the blue fades into misty, pearly whiteness, that is as dreamy as an Eastern enchantment. We point out eagerly to each other these several beauties, and then there is a loud noise in the distance, and merry shouts, and the hunters come riding along from Holywell House, where dwells the squire, John Glanville, and as they ride one of them sings, in loud, musical tones, this hunting-song:—

"The hunt is up! the hunt is up!
Be merrie while you may,
For Harry, our king, hath gone huntinge,
To bring the deer to bay.

"The horses snort to be at the sport,
The dogs are running free;
The woods rejoice at the merrie noise
Of 'Hey! tantara! teevee!'

"The sun is glad to see us clad
All in our lustie green,
And smiles in the sky, as he riseth high.
To see and to be seene."

While all join in the hearty chorus :—

"Awake, all men, I say againe,
Be merrie while you may,
For Harry, our king, hath gone huntinge,
To bring the deer to bay." *

There are a goodly threescore of hunters at the very least, surrounded by their pack of hounds, the animals all ready and eager for the chase, and hardly restrained from running by their master, who, with his long whip in his hand, watches them, intent upon their movements. At sight of which abundance of dogs, Cicely clings to me somewhat affrighted ; but the boys advance boldly, as near as may be, to have the fuller view of the pretty animals. And as we stand somewhat aside from the road they come upon, to let them pass, I perceived Squire Glanville himself and his son mounted upon their excellent steeds, also Thomas Tremain, the Squire of Cullacombe, and no less than four out of his eight sons with him ; all of

* Old hunting-song of the 16th century.

whom I respectfully salute as they pass me, bidding my children do the like, they all answering my salutation with much kindliness, and a word or two of pleasantry for the young folks. And no sooner have they passed us, than the view halloo is given, the dogs dash off at full speed across the heather, and there are cries and shouts till the blaze of red and green coats and shining spurs vanish into mere specks amid the gleams of brilliant sunshine.

Hildebrand takes up the lively song of the hunters, and then chases his brother and sister over the soft turf till the ruddy glow of health upon their cheeks deepens into a brighter, fresher carmine, after which we rest ourselves, while I recount unto them divers tales concerning Italy, which they never weary of listening to, and of that new world which Christopher Columbus has but recently brought to man's knowledge, and which still remains a *terra incognita* to so many of our older men who cannot conceive that there is a vast land inhabited beyond the seas.

"Fain would I be a sailor," quoth Hildebrand; "fain would I sail out from Plymouth Sound in a

big ship, and come back and tell thee, dear Friar Hildebrand, and my mother and Cicely and Walter, all that I have seen. And I would bring unto poor little Arthur all the prettiest things that I could find—feathers and gold and shells. Thinkest thou that I may go when I am a man, dear friar?" The "Arthur" that Hildebrand speaks of is the crippled brother, to whom each member of the family ever shows the most loving tenderness, if so be they might thus somewhat ease his sore pain.

"Thou wilt perhaps find it thy duty to go, Hildebrand. God hath appointed that there be men to plough the sea as well as the land; there be vast treasures unguessed of yet in those fair islands of the Atlantic. There be men springing up everywhere, many perchance yet in their infancy, who must do the work that God wants to have done in those far regions, who must plant the cross and civilize the new world of which their ancestors hardly dreamed. My youth has passed, yet have I at times the longings, the wishes of a boy for new discoveries, and the exploring of unknown countries, when I read what Columbus

has written, and Cabot, and the sturdy mariners that fear not the winds nor the waves when God sends them forth. Perhaps thou, my Hildebrand, my dear namesake, mayest tread instead of me the lands I fain would see; mayest exalt the cross where I would willingly have done it. But behold, my Hildebrand, how the sun creeps up into the sky while we talk. We must away, or thy dear mother will have reason to chide me that I keep her children from their school. Off! off! away!" and with merry laughter I send the young ones before me back to the town. The school bell already chimes as we enter it, and without tarrying to go to the Abbaye, I proceed thitherward at once, while the merry young ones seek their home for a mouthful, if but of dry bread; the keen bright air has implanted an appetite within them, and each protests his great hunger.

THE RECKLESS DOINGS OF THE KING.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RECKLESS DOINGS OF THE KING.

SEPTEMBER 10th, 1536.—Truly the end draws near. The unsparing hand of the king tears down, one after another, those ancient establishments of the Church which he once delighted to honour; in all which works he is mightily upheld and encouraged by the said Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, whom I have mentioned heretofore in this diary. And with some of the changes which this great dignitary goes about to establish, I fear not to express myself well pleased; amongst which is the introduction of the Bible into all the churches of our land, a reform which it behoves us to make. Hitherto the Scriptures have been a sealed book to almost all the laity, which is, as I conceive, a most grievous error; for how shall men understand the nature of the God whose laws they are to obey, and the

character of the Saviour whose example they are to imitate, if the written revelation of the Godhead is kept from them? Truly our Father in heaven mercifully reveals Himself to us day by day in the outside world; the summer glory of the sun, the beauty of the earth, the pure glistening of the winter snows, the carolling of birds, the bursting of spring greenness, the gems set on the brow of night, yea, even the whispering of the rocky river Tavy that I listen to even now as it hastens ever to the far-off sea, are all revelations of God.

But these can never save man's soul. They form a revelation of creation—not a revelation of salvation. But Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," speaks straight to the heart of the man who reverently opens the sacred pages of the Bible, wherein the whole plan of redemption is spread out visibly in the brightest colours.

Yet here in our Abbaye I hear it affirmed constantly that Cranmer is too much linked in this and all matters to those new heresies, of which Martin Luther may be considered at the helm, to have any real desire for the profit and

glory of the Holy Catholic Church. Our monks are complaining grievously. They quite piteously declare that though they could more quietly and patiently bear the ruin that is to come upon us if we monks alone were to be the sufferers, yet when they reflect upon the stoppage that must accrue unto learning, the ignorance that will then obtain the control of matters, as well spiritual as temporal, and also consider the grievous wrong that will be done towards the poor, the decrepit, the suffering, and the aged, who have ever so largely participated in the bounty of the Abbaye, coming day by day, as one may say, to receive the Divine charity; their souls are oppressed and sore grieved; and out of their weary depths they cry, "Lord, undertake for us!"

For they do most vividly picture how we, bereft of our power to relieve the wants of others, must be found sending them away hungry, naked, and miserable, from our gates, and closing the door upon the destitute, while we open it to follow them ourselves into the unknown, untried ways of men.

For myself, I feel that a greater good may be over this apparent evil; yet never till now that the near prospect of losing the delights of this fair Abbaye is before me, did I estimate highly enough the picturesque beauty of this lovely vale, the quietude of my own little sanctuary, which has been glorified by so many happy dreams, which has been the scene of so many heart-searching conflicts with self; and whence I heard, in storm and sunshine, winter and summer, the everlasting plash and murmur of the rocky river. Yester-eve I walked with my dear child Hildebrand to Crowndale, to the farm of the worthy yeoman John Drake, with whom I had much discourse upon the present state of our country, for he is a sage and patriarchal man, who reminds me in many particulars of the quiet philosopher Isaac of the Bible, loving much to meditate upon God's presence in nature. He has a goodly son, likewise named John, more occupied, as it seems, with the affairs of this life, but of an honest, upright bearing, and a frank, pleasant countenance. His second son, Francis, has he sent to college, designing him for a priest, for he per-

ceived in him much aptitude for learning, and in this I have done my part to persuade him, for the lad was with me in our school at Tavystoke, and became therein a diligent scholar, and no small favourite with his teachers. And yet methinks the priest's calling is about to become a difficult one in this land, the reason whereof, that to-day is truth called truth, and to-morrow heresy, through the great fickleness of the king, who appears to treat the Catholic Church and the so-called Lutheran heresies somewhat as he treats his wives—to-day fully satisfied with one, to-morrow turning to another, so that it would seem impossible for either to please him. For the Lady Anna Boleyn, whose charms first so disturbed the king's mind as to cause his religion to waver for her sake, has met this year with an ignominious death, her beauteous head being severed from her fair form by the cruel axe, while upon the day following the king married another wife, one Jane Seymour; and since then no woman, surely, who desires long life would *choose* to wed King Hal, unless she had more belief in the power of her own wit

and beauty than a sensible woman should have. Hildebrand and I returned along by the river, wherein he tried his skill in the piscatorial art, for he has fashioned for himself, with some ability, a rod and line; and though I never indulge in this pastime, seeing but little pleasure in torturing any of God's creatures, yet, as I greatly doubt that he will catch any fish, and also because I have no wish to make it a sin in his eyes, believing that fishes are designed for the food of man, and there is great abundance of fine trout in this pleasant river Tavy, I throw myself contentedly on the grass beside him, under the great trees that dip their long branches into the cool water, and muse and dream as has always been a favourite occupation of mine from boyhood, until now.

I have thought much of late of the complaints of my brother monks; of the wailings and lamentations they make on behalf of the poor, who now get a daily meal from the surplus meats in our refectory, and who, they say, will be sure to lack sufficient sustenance when this is denied them. But have we done wisely to make beggars

of our poor? Is there not a better spirit to be awakened in men's minds than to regard religion but as an agreeable institution for the feeding of the stomachs of the lazy? Is it wise to make men and women perpetual recipients of bounty themselves, instead of teaching them to work, that they may become the more blessed distributors of bounty to others? Has this charity of our Abbaye, about which we vaunt so proudly, cost us individually one moment's self-denial? And can charity, unless it be the beauteous garb of honest self-denial, be worth anything in the sight of the all-loving, all-charitable God?

I have been especially interested of late to learn that the German "Protestants," for so they call the followers of Luther in that country, amongst whom are several princes of the Empire and men of authority, have determined upon applying the revenues of monasteries, and other ecclesiastical funds, to the best of uses; namely, to the establishment of schools and hospitals for both sexes, and to a provision for the maintenance of ministers over the several Protestant parishes.

If only our king would do the like with that which comes into his hands!

March 5th, 1537.—To-day there came to us a monk from the priory of Plympton, who brought solemn and painful tidings. The king's arbitrary power is put in force, and the Prior of Plympton has received notice to be ready to quit and render up his lands and belongings within three months. Our turn will soon come now. Already are there spread abroad in the land some hundreds of banished, homeless monks and nuns, who look in vain for shelter in the spots endeared to them by many precious memories. Some have determined to proceed to Ireland, and find refuge amongst the faithful in that island; others repair to Italy, Spain, and France; while yet others turn to those vast countries, newly discovered, beyond the seas, with thoughts of spreading therein the honour and glory of our Divine religion. For myself, I know not how I shall tear myself away from this sweet spot—how I shall separate myself wholly from the pleasant life at the Abbaye Mills, and the dear faces there—above all, the one beloved countenance that

has filled my heart nigh upon twenty years with its sweet image, and with which all my history seems to be enwoven. Yet I would fain not be burdensome to any one.

June 18th, 1537.—Last night, after vespers, I repaired to my oak tree beside the river, and sat myself amongst its branches, thinking, thinking till my poor brain grew weary of thought, and I tried to listen instead to the voice of God that spoke in the soft summer breeze, and the deep rounded notes of the beetles that droned about or went buzzing by as if on some high mission in their little sphere. I stayed there till the night had far advanced; the air was warm and balmy, and it refreshed me to sit thus. I shall not much longer have the right, and each leaf of the trees grows dearer to me for this thought. How have I sat there at all seasons of mind, and of body, and of the outside world, with the storm and whirlwind of my passion for Cicely sweeping through my soul, and with the tranquil joy of trying to do good animating my spirit! When the fair moon shines down upon the still world, and when each floweret has basked

in the sun's golden light, I have watched the wondrous beauties of both night and day from my old haunt. Who will come after us? What changes will the years bring with them? What new thoughts, what new discoveries will man make that shall influence this Devonshire valley and these old Abbaye lands? Will happy lovers walk beside this river and murmur love secrets to each other's ears, and forget in their own absorbing joy all the passions, the griefs, the pleasures, the pursuits in which we, the black-robed Augustinians, shared, who dwelt here so long ago? Will—but why should I question thus that unseen, unknown future that hath no power to answer me? The past alone revealeth secrets, the story of the future is unwritten.

MY SOUL AND I.

CHAPTER XXII.

MY SOUL AND I.

JULY 1, 1537.—I have been grieved to-day to hear my brother monks rejoicing in a malicious manner over the failing health of Martin Luther, for it seems to me both unkind and unchristian because we disagree with a man in controversy that we should wish him ill in his private life. While attending a Protestant assembly at Smalkald, in Germany, in the spring, he was, they say, taken so ill as to believe himself dying, and was still worse after he had set out for his home, so that he, never thinking but that he was in the article of death, took leave of all his relatives and friends, sending messages to many. But he has rallied again, and still struggles bravely for what he conceives to be the truth. The great German reformer is noble of heart and firm of faith, a man to be admired even by his enemies. For

myself, I do constantly take some degree of pride in the fact that he was one of our own order, an Augustinian like ourselves, and that monastic walls have not proved so thick but that the sunlight of truth has at first pierced them to reach the soul of Martin Luther, and is now irradiating the world from the influence of this German friar. For no one can, I suppose, deny that his great dispute with His Holiness the Pope about the mass and indulgences, and the free reading of the Scriptures, has led to greater thought and knowledge of religion itself in the minds of men than was likely otherwise. For there had been much of dull stagnation in men's minds, and carelessness in their actions, whether they pleased God or not; till he, shaking the world to its centre by the bold things he dared to write and speak, made men turn inward and ask themselves, What is Christianity, apart from mass and confession; from priest and from church? Is it verily, as this man asserts, a matter between God and my own soul, in which none other can safely to himself, or profitably for me, interfere?

I have of late heard much and read more of the

writings of Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon, his thoughtful and pious friend. Luther declares that he teaches no new thing, but only the doctrine of Christ as preached fifteen hundred years ago by Himself and His apostles. Luther's great desire is that men should themselves search the Scriptures for the warranty of his propositions. Is it cowardly of me to wish that he had used his giant intellect within the Church, reforming it, rather than outside of it, while he washes his hands from intercourse with what he conceives to be its guilt and apostasy? I think no man can deny how much need of reform there was and is; how easily the arrows of reproof found entrance through the faulty armour of the Church, how powerless she was to resist the satire of that great satirist Erasmus, a man of Dutch parentage and birth, who died last year in the Swiss canton of Basle, and who, though a Churchman himself, and for years the Greek Professor at our English College of Cambridge, left behind him his bitter words to vex the souls of all who desired to be at ease in the bosom of Mother Church, and to supply her enemies with arguments. Many of his

writings were penned in this beloved land, for which he had a great and wise affection, and even Luther himself with all his force and truth, Melancthon with all his gentle reproofs, never wrote and spoke more strongly or bitterly or openly than did Erasmus against the Orders of our Church.

Our prior and many of our monks deem it heresy even to read his books. But I could never bear to deprive myself of this means of coming at the truth. For unless we read the writings of a man with whom we have no means of other intercourse, how shall we decide aright whether he be a true man or not?

Of our monasteries, he says, with particular reference to that in which he studied—Stein, near Tergou—that they are "destitute of learning and of sound religion." "They are places of impiety," he says in his treatise, "De Contemptu Mundi," "where everything is done to which a depraved inclination can lead, under the mask of religion. It is hardly possible for any one to keep himself pure and unspotted."

Now I have no wish to assert so sweeping a

charge against this quiet and peaceful dwelling-place of Tavystoke Abbaye; yet I do not, and cannot, pretend that our daily life is what I conceive it should be. Our monks, for the most part, do not by any means deny themselves the ordinary pleasures of life; and for religious men to spend their time day after day in hunting and hawking, feasting and playing cards, even though for stakes of very small amount, is surely not in accordance with the spirit of our vows. Yet may charity—nay, rather common honesty—forbid that I should attempt their judgment, who find myself in so many matters thoroughly guilty and faulty.

Since I have completed the painted windows of our Abbaye church and of the refectory, and finished the transcription and illumination of the legends, in both of which I took so much and such real delight, the restlessness of an unsatisfied and too idle life is often very strong upon me. I, therefore, turn with satisfaction from unprofitable yearnings and longings to the controversial books which have so much interested me of late. I feel that there is much sympathy, at least of taste, between my soul and that of Martin Luther, and

this in spite of that strength and courage and earnestness which are so conspicuous in him, and in all of which I am, alas! so lamentably deficient. I find myself leaning upon his mind in a strange degree, and tempted to accept his decisions rather than to exercise my own judgment upon weighty matters. Yet this is exactly what he would deem a poor proof of my desire to know the truth.

That in which I feel myself to especially resemble him is our mutual delight in God's visible creation: our fondness amounting almost to a passion for the innocent company and sweet society of little children; our intense dislike of those indulgences to sin which man in the person of His Holiness the Pope assumes he has the power to grant; our mistrust of relics; and our disposition to place Christ alone as the Mediator between God and man. In all my eager searching of my Bible and comparison of our Church's doctrines with the Scriptures, in this particular I cannot discover any foundation whatever for our worship of the Holy Virgin even, much less of the saints, to whom, though they were once erring, sinful creatures like ourselves, the Church gives so

much specious intercessory authority and power. Most blessed, no doubt, was Mary amongst women in the honour conferred upon her to become the mother of our Lord; but since she herself confesses with loving gratitude and becoming humility that her Son is her Saviour, why should we exalt her, the redeemed one, to an equality with her Redeemer? Surely this is far from her mind, and we do dishonour her most when we deprive her of the position she delighted to give to Him, in order to bestow it upon her. The words of Christ give no authority whatsoever to the worship of His mother. When one told Him, "Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with Thee," He asked, "Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?" and Himself answered the question; for, "stretching forth His hand towards His disciples," He said, "Behold, My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."

And when, during one of Christ's powerful discourses, "a certain woman of the company"

interrupted Him to pronounce a special benediction upon His mother, He gently answered her, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it," as if He would thus prevent any possibility of misunderstanding, as if He would guard against the very doctrine our Church maintains, and prevent special homage, special reverence being paid to her.[1]

Believing that in so many particulars Martin Luther's doctrines are indeed in accordance with the Scriptures, am I justified in keeping within my own breast my accord with them?

All the habits of my life make me shrink with pain from any disavowal of my former convictions. And if all who are in favour of radical reform leave the Church, how shall such reform be carried out? Does it not become all good Catholics—and especially now that the Church is daily more and more dismembered and confused in this land—to hold her up with their own faithfulness, to support her with their own strength, even if it be

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[1] I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to a sermon of Bishop Temple for this suggestion.—M. A. P.

but little that is granted to them? Were she at the height of power and prosperity I could think, more unmoved, more calmly, of quitting her bosom for ever. Being, as she is, in adversity, I shrink from anything that may lead to such a conclusion on my part.

Yet, were I one of Martin Luther's Protestants, I should feel that I breathed a freer, purer air. And if I were outside the pale of our Church, and unfettered by the vows of our Order, assuredly I would never, knowing what I know of both, seek to re-enter either.

Oh, my soul, be brave, shrink not from the contemplation of the many difficulties which surround and puzzle thee; seek for Divine light and grace, light to guide thee, grace to acknowledge thy belief, even though this should bring thee the obloquy and scorn of thy fellows. Thinking thus, my mind followed very closely the trials of Moses and the wanderings of the Israelites when they started from Egypt, their house of bondage, a poor oppressed race, to the land great for them with a future of triumph and prosperity, and my quill, though it is long since I have attempted

verses, traversed my paper with these lines, rather a paraphrase than an original.

A PILLAR OF CLOUD BY DAY AND A PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT.

In the bright days when pleasure smiles around us,
And our sweet dreams are ushered into light,
Lest the too dazzling lustre should confound us,
Be Thou our night!

In the dark days when Hope seems dead within us,
And our souls battle with the clouds of night,
When Satan and his hosts draw near to win us,
Be Thou our light!

CICELY'S OFFER.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CICELY'S OFFER.

JULY 14, 1538.—I have been moved this day to my very heart's depths. The long-expected news has arrived this morning, that early in the approaching year our Abbot, John Penryn, must give up into the King's hands his lands, his Abbaye, his church, and every adjunct of both. In the afternoon I visited the Abbaye Mills to acquaint my dear friends Walter Hawley and Cicely, in privacy, with this hard mandate.

"And what does thou purpose to do, dear Friar Hildebrand?" questioned Cicely, turning her kind eyes upon me where I sat, and gently rocking the cradle of her sleeping babe the while with one foot, "thou wilt not leave us, dear friar?"

"I know not," said I, moved more than I might manifest by this her tenderness towards me.

"There is always a home for thee at the Abbaye

Mills, Friar Hildebrand," Walter Hawley said kindly. "Whatever King Hal does with his abbots and monks, his subjects must needs have their corn ground; I have no fear that my wheel will stand idle for any change."

Walter Hawley is right; a community needs not abbots and monks as it needs millers and flour.

"Yes, thou wilt promise us to stay with us, dear Friar Hildebrand," pleaded Cicely, with tears in her eyes; "God knoweth how I mourn thy changed estate, dear friar. How cruel it seems this rash law, that turns out so many good and holy men and women houseless into the streets and lanes, to seek such shelter as they may amongst those who love the Church and her servants better than the King does. And how can a King who has no heart in him be expected to care for the sufferings of others?" she added, with her old impetuous speech. "How can a man who has no love even for the mother of his children be expected to remember the servants of God and the poor souls whom these have taken such care to support? Dear Friar Hildebrand, what wilt thou

do, and what will all of you do with the crowd that now comes daily to the refectory and kitchens for food and drink, and oftentimes even to the cloisters for clothes? Oh! I much fear me there will be many an aged one pushed into the grave, many a weakly one made a corpse, many a widow and orphan obliged to shed bitter tears when the Abbaye gates are closed against them."

"Dear Cicely, prithee torture me not," said I, wholly moved even to tears and heavy sobs by these her lamentable words, and knowing only too well how much truth there was in what she spake of as about to come to pass.

"My dear Friar Hildebrand, I would rather seek to comfort thee than add to thy sorrow," said she kindly, "and at least thou wilt promise us to come to the shelter of our home in the first pitiless outburst of the storm."

"Nay, rather," said Walter Hawley, "reveal thy whole mind to Friar Hildebrand, dear wife, and let the matter rest with him, to decide as seems best to him."

"I bethought me," said Cicely then, speaking with some timidity, "of our dear boys and their

schooling, and I hope, dear Friar Hildebrand, thou mayst be of the mind to stay with us, and complete what thou thyself hast begun in them. Our house is large, and there is abundance of rooms in it; thou shalt have thy oratory and cell, dear friar, and what thou wilt, together with a room wherein to instruct our children."

My heart leapt joyously within me, and then a cold chill struck terror through my veins, as I learned by this strong emotion how weak I still was in her dear presence. Could I live thus as she proposed, with any peace to my own soul? This question made me hesitate before I answered her. "I trow not," said conscience; and then I thanked both her and Walter Hawley with all the words which friendship suggested, and yet still left it a matter of grave doubt as to what I might find it right to decide.

August 12th, 1539.—Our departure has been delayed a few months, but I write for the last time to-night in this cell of the dear old Tavystoke Abbaye; here, where for twenty years I have found my home, I may not any longer dwell; the trees, the river, the Abbot's garden with its flowers

are to me fast sinking away into the past, into that dreamland that we look back upon with so much of tenderness and regret. Yes, albeit we have known therein many bitter trials, have passed through many a sore experience, the home of twenty years endears itself to us strangely.

The King has granted John Penryn, our Abbot, a pension of £100 a year, and to nineteen of the officers amongst us various smaller sums which will remove them from want or dependence; but I could not find it in my heart to claim that which belonged to me in this apportionment as librarian of the Abbaye, for it seemed to me like taking a gift from the robber who has deprived you of means, and then offers you that which is not his to give.

For the rest of us there is no provision whatsoever made by the greedy monarch, who grasps this rich Abbaye, as he has already grasped so many others, to his own aggrandizement.

I feel sad and discontented this glorious summer eve, my heart rebels against my lot, against this chafing of my self-will, as in the old days it rebelled for as bitter, though a more personal trial

The cross weighs heavily to-night, and this hot air, which steals through my chamber, rather enervates than rouses me. Am I then no nearer heavenly self-denial than I was in the years long gone by, when I yearned so wildly, so passionately for sweet Cicely? Have all the days of penance, of mortification, of fasting, of solitude, of earnest work, and the later hours of rigid self-examination and careful study that I have known since then, left my spirit still unpurged, unpurified? I much fear me it is so; I cannot see that my soul is any fitter for heaven than it was on the May morning when I twined my darling's flower-wreath, and wove her chaplet. St. Cécile looks at me tenderly with her young fresh beauty from the wall of my cell, and the red evening light glows upon the Parian marble Christ upon the Cross. His generous Holiness Leo, who gave it me, is dead long ago; many a successor has, since he died, filled the Papal chair. The world is full of change—can I expect it to pause in its course for one black monk? Can I expect to lift the cross from my heart till the iron cross of my Order rests on a still form, and death is to me the gate of life? To-morrow I go to the Hawleys,

and afterwards—whither? The islands beyond the sea attract me strangely. I dare not rest; I dare not take up my permanent abode at the Abbaye Mills; some careless word, some eager utterance, might suddenly reveal the secret of my life to Walter Hawley or Cicely, and thus the peace and joy of that fair, sunny home might be endangered. I will away. Her life, her love, her purity, her sweetness, can never cease to influence me as they have done all these years. Her prayers will follow me; daily she will commend me to the Divine Lord; she will teach her children to think tenderly of me. Yes, that is all I ask of her. I will not linger near her, nor near to this beloved old Abbaye, whose most silent nook is crowded with the thought of her. I will away out into the wild, uncivilized regions of the West, where I may speak to ignorant savages of the great work of Christ.

I need not teach nor preach to them any other doctrine than "that of Christ and Him crucified." Gently, kindly, I will strive to enter into an understanding and appreciation of their untutored lives, and bring the sweetest, simplest blessings of

Christianity to them ; not the differences between our Church and the Protestants, but the difference between the fear with which the Pagan nations approach the Great Spirit, and the childlike trust and reverence which it is the Christian's privilege to feel.

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I take my pen again after I had laid it down to transcribe in this diary a page from the great German reformer's writings, which I have but just read, and which strengthens me not a little in thought of the sad to-morrow. Oh ! that my faith were but as grand as his !

"I looked out at my window, and saw two prodigies. I beheld the glittering stars, and all the glorious vault of Heaven : I looked around for the pillars by which it was upheld ; but I could discover none. Yet it remained firm and secure The same unseen hand which had formed sustained it still. Yet numbers anxiously search on all sides for its supports : could they feel them with their hands they might then be at ease ; but, as this is impossible, they live in constant disquiet, lest the heavens should fall down upon their heads !

I beheld again, and lo, thick clouds of water, like a mighty ocean, which I saw nothing to contain, nothing to hold up, rolled above our heads. Yet they descended not upon us; but, after presenting a threatening aspect for a little time, they passed away, and a brilliant rainbow succeeded them. This was our protection (Genesis ix.). Yet it appeared frail and evanescent; and, though it has ever hitherto proved availing, still numbers think more of the thick and dark mass of waters than of the slender fleeting arch of light. They want to have sensible proof of its sufficiency; and because they cannot obtain that, they live in dread of a second deluge."*

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* "Luther and the Reformation," by Rev. John Scott, pp. 31, 32.

TURNING WESTWARD.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TURNING WESTWARD.

ABBAYE MILLS, August 13th, 1539.—Who shall describe it all? what tongue has words enough, what pen diligence enough to notify the tears, the sobs, the distressful plaints that surrounded us this morning, when we quitted, in a long sorrowful procession, the Abbaye that has sheltered the brethren of our Order for no less a time than near 600 years. The whole people as it would seem of this goodly town assembled to bewail our departure from amongst them, and more especially the aged, the infirm, the widows, the orphans, the lepers, who had shared our bounty. Alas! alas! Even the very birds that were wont to take of our crumbs in the winter season seemed to me, as I looked and listened from the window of my cell, to have a sad sweetness in their songs, and rather woke the echoes of the valley with mournful notes

than with anything of jubilant sound; the river, low in its bed from the long drought of summer, murmured to us a sad farewell, and my own heart felt very sorrowful when the pretty little children of the good town ran along beside me, sobbing and stretching out their fat little hands, and crying, "Alack-a-day; good friars, we do not want you to leave us!" while the older folk muttered against the king between their teeth, and some of the bolder ones cursed him aloud as the proud spoiler of God's house. Thank God, there were, I think, none who rejoiced at our being driven forth. Even those who have imbibed the doctrines of the Reformation, and know that we are indeed somewhat useless cumberers of the ground; as well as those who see a sinner beneath every cowl and hypocrisy under every iron cross, and believe that our suppression is necessary, and means the advancement of this our native land, which I cannot hide from myself is indeed a truth, were yet too modest at this moment to glory in our disgrace. The first thing after matins we met in the abbot's hall, where John Penryn did, with much kindliness, and many touching words, address him-

self unto us, praying us to believe that God would not forget our labours of love in this Abbaye, nor the many solemn hours wherein the souls of men had here communed with the Lord God Almighty; calling upon us to remember the patience and endurance of our Great Master Christ, and to be willing to "count all things but dross" for His sake. Then did we affectionately embrace our abbot, and each other, more especially those between whom a dearer friendship prevailed.

So, after our breakfast in the refectory, which seemed rather to choke than to nourish me, we met again in the same place, and thence passed out at the Abbaye gate, as I have already described, into the wide world beyond, which has now for us no home, no resting-place, but that which the charitable offer unto us.

Now I, being come to the Abbaye Mills, find all arranged in order for me by kind Cicely, whose tenderness surpasses what I have ever known in her, for she welcomed me with tears and smiles, and set the little ones around me, that they by their artless prattle, and pretty innocent caresses, may make me somewhat forget my misery. Yet

I cannot stay here, this my heart tells me every hour, as I listen to her pleasant voice, and watch her sweet face, and note each kindly act of her dear hands. Only in the great world far away can my soul find peace, or my life employment. The decree which has banished me from the Abbaye banishes me likewise from Cicely, from England.

April 20th, 1540.—To-morrow I set out for Plymouth, and then sail for Spain, and afterwards to Mexico, a land of much beauty and fertility, opened up these past few years to the religion of the Cross by the great Spanish commander, Fernando Cortez. Here may I, by example, by precept, by tenderness, humanity, and gentleness, win the souls of the soft-natured, kindly Indians to Christ. Hildebrand Hawley accompanies me. The old longings in the boy's heart have ripened to intense passionate desires; he has prayed his parents to grant his wishes, and at length his mother has given him to me, with many anxious fears, many tender charges, much sorrow, but, nevertheless, she gives him. His father entrusts him to me with less fears, but plenty of wise advice to the boy. "Take heed how thou workest, Hildebrand," saith he; "silver

and gold are to be had in Mexico, but these are not worth a man's health, neither his good name; if thou sacrificest either to obtain them, thou art a loser, not a gainer. Hold fast, my son, to the Christian faith, the faith of thy parents and thy friends; dishonour not this good friar whose name thou bearest, and so, dear boy, to bed; the morning light starts you on your long journey."

After which we met around the altar of my little oratory, which Cicely promised to keep as it is now placed, and whereat she says she will daily offer her prayers for our safe journeyings and deliverance from all dangers. I have put thereon my Parian marble Christ, and above the altar hangs sweet St. Cecilia. Cannot Cicely trace her own fair image in that lovely form? Will she never guess of all my tenderness, my faith, my sacrifices, my cross? Alas! never. God be merciful to her, my darling, and comfort her in this her deep sorrow at her boy's departure and her old friend's good-bye, and shield her from every trouble, or gather her out of the storm into the hollow of His hand.

I dare not write more of her; and this my diary,

in so far as it is the diary of a monk of Tavystoke Abbaye, which I once thought my diary ever would be unto the end of my small earthly life, must close now. I deposit it, along with one or two other documents of legal value, and my copies of the old manuscripts concerning our Abbaye, in a small iron box, the key whereof I shall entrust to Cicely until my return or her knowledge of my death. The curl of her hair, and the missal that contains on the margin the sketch of her dear face, go with me into the unknown regions of the new world.

In my last confidential talk with Walter Hawley, who has ever proved himself so honest and upright a man, and so sincere in his friendship towards myself, I deemed it right to entrust him somewhat with my views upon the polity and the faults of our Church, particularly as he had confided his eldest son to my care. I took the opportunity to-night thus to open my mind while Cicely had gone to her boy's room to pack his sea-chest with a few last things for his comfort, and to pour out to him some of that great motherly tenderness and affection that had filled her eyes with tears, almost

every time she had looked on him of late, at thought of his departure.

To my great surprise the honest miller proved himself far more and better acquainted with the pros and cons of the whole matter, not only than I had anticipated, but more than almost all the monks of our Abbaye, who have so much leisure to study, and might be supposed to have so much deeper interest in the questions of belief and doctrine. He has even read a great number of the writings both of Martin Luther, and Erasmus, and Philip Melancthon.

"I would not trouble the women folk about it, Friar Hildebrand," he remarked; "women are best when they busy themselves least about learned questions that they cannot understand. Their religion is all right mostly, for it is a religion of love and trust. Cicely would break her dear heart, almost, if she thought I no longer put faith in confession, and relics, and indulgences, and images, and the like. Women have queer little notions; they think better of us men—monks, and priests, and all—than we half deserve, and I will not have her happiness unsettled. She

cried like a child when you black friars came tropping out and away from the Abbaye; but though I comforted her as well as I could, and said again and again, as I patted her cheek, 'Why, sweetheart, one would think the mill was burnt, to see thy tears;' yet I felt in my heart that every Abbaye broken up, every colony of monks turned out to work like honest men for their bread, would be a blessing to old England. No offence to thee, Friar Hildebrand, for thou hast never been a fat, oily monk like so many of thy brethren, shirking labour and living on other people's toil; and I love thee for thy useful life amongst the poor and the children, and here's my hand."

Whereupon we shook hands cordially. "If I'd been the poorest miller that ever watched the turning of the millwheel," he continued, "I would not have accepted thy care of my son, nor permitted thy adoption of him, unless thou hadst been another sort of monk to those lazy rogues who have made just men so angry. If 'twasn't for the dear little wife, I'd call myself a Protestant to-morrow, and give my tongue free scope.

England, be her soil ever so rich, can never afford to maintain colonies of idle monks and priests upon it."

"Are there many men who feel as thou dost on this matter, Walter Hawley?" I asked, surprised at this declaration on his part; and he answered:—

"Friar Hildebrand, there will soon be a grand stir and awakening in this land, and conflict too, I fear. There are hundreds and thousands of men who, thanks to William Tyndale, have begun to read their Bibles. And that blessed book teaches freedom from priestly tyranny. It teaches that men are equal in God's sight; that no man, because he is called a priest, has a right to take another man's soul into his keeping, and judge whether that soul is clean or unclean before God."

"This would be called rank heresy," said I.

"A good many truths have been called rank heresy by Churchmen," said Walter Hawley, smiling pleasantly. "But thou thyself, dear friar, hast never taught me, when I confessed to thee, to shirk from meeting my doubts; or that thou couldst buy me off from the punishment

of a little sin with a few groats, or of a great sin with a noble. Thou mightest have been Martin Luther himself, for thou wouldst reason with me, and not treat me as an inferior being, though, as thou wert a monk, that is what thou shouldst have done."

"Truly," said I, "I always feel, and for very many years have felt, that we are all children of God, and that mere accidents of position, such as greater learning, more money, more time, exalted rank, are but talents to enable us to help each other, to minister to each other—not to lord it over one another, either in matters temporal or spiritual."

"It is well for the sake of the credit of thy Church that thou art going far away from the conflict that is coming in this land, to preach to the heathenish nations of the earth," said Walter Hawley, "for in a very little time thou wouldst be turned out of her communion, for thy too unfettered, too Christian heart and tongue."

We were interrupted at this point by the return of Cicely from the chamber of her boy, and our talk became more strictly personal.

But is Walter Hawley right? My God! forgive me, if my coward heart has shrunk from a conflict which I suspected was impending, and in which I ought to have engaged. How many times I have sympathised with the tenderness of the gentle-souled Philip Melancthon, who has proved himself so anxious for peace amidst the storm of religious dissensions and broils in Germany.

If the words of honest Walter Hawley be indeed prophetic of that which shall come to pass, and my own dear country, whose shores I shall soon leave, must be given up ere long to the storm of a religious revolution, I ask for her but one thing, that God, who is the Truth, may manifest Himself to her more clearly, till upon her shall arise the glory of a perfect day of freedom.

A day in which man shall cease to regard his fellow as the slave of creed or priest; a day when no hard-and-fast line shall be drawn between layman and ecclesiastic; but when both shall be regarded alike, if devout men, as "kings and priests unto God"; a day when the soul shall rise unfettered from its man-made trammels; a

day when the Scriptures—God's gift to the whole world of His fallen, erring children—shall be in the hands of each man, woman, and child to study for him or herself. When all who believe simply that Christ is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life," and that faith in Him alone justifies us in God's sight, may clasp hands lovingly.

And if because our hearts are hard, and our feet turned out of the way, the path to this blessed day shall be made ghastly with fierce combat, with bones, and blood, and fire, with persecutions, and deadly feuds, oh! Eternal Father, have pity; have pity on the poor people—alike on persecutor and persecuted; and grant that everlasting truth may conquer, and falsehood and superstition be laid low. Amen

HERE, THE CROSS! THERE,
THE CROWN!

CHAPTER XXV.

HERE, THE CROSS! THERE, THE CROWN!

(NOTE, written for Cicely Hawley (who cannot write) by her son Hildebrand.)

May 20th, 1559.—But a week ago, my dear son Hildebrand, whom I had long ago given up for dead, returned to me; he found me still here in this same dwelling of the Abbaye Mills, though bereft of my dearly beloved spouse and his dear father, Walter Hawley.

My son Walter now manages the mills, and allows me an ample maintenance therefrom, with rooms sufficient for myself and my two girls, Judith and Betty, who are all now remaining with me of my large family, the rest being all married but Hildebrand, and diversely scattered, save my darling crippled Arthur, and the little babe Winifred, that I buried late in the autumn of that same year when dear Friar Hildebrand and my

eldest son went away; who lie so quietly waiting for the resurrection in the Abbaye churchyard, beside whom their father now sleeps these eight long years.

There have been many wondrous changes in this our land since the time when the Black Monks flourished in our Abbaye. Now the whole nation fast turns Protestant, because our new Queen Elizabeth belongs to that faith; but every one who minds to live peaceably and orderly, without trying to injure the Queen upon her throne, which God and the saints forbid, worships, if they be so minded, without molestation, according to the old faith—the faith of their fathers. I have preserved, unaltered, as I promised him, the little altar of the good Friar Hildebrand, together with his picture of the holy St. Cecilia, which Walter always did declare resembles me, although I formerly thought this but mere accident; and the dear Saviour on the Cross in marble of rarest workmanship. Here have I come day by day, to offer up my prayers for my darling boy and the good true friend to whom I have entrusted him; and I kept the key of Friar Hildebrand's small iron box,

along with all my house keys, and never guessed what was shut within, in the many closely written pages of manuscript, which Hildebrand and I have but now finished reading together. My eyes are so red with weeping, and my heart feels so full of sorrow at all the good monk's trouble in the past, and his passion and true love for me, of which I then and for so long knew nothing, that I am altogether overcome.

The manner of the dear friar's death was on this wise, as Hildebrand, who remained with him to the very last, tells me. His death happened full ten years back, while I have been praying many and many a time for his deliverance from danger, not knowing that already Christ had delivered him.

Hildebrand says it was a very lovely spot at which he died, and that would suit him well, for he ever loved flowers, and birds, and sunshine, above most men. My son says he had had appointed to him by one of the Jesuit Fathers a little dwelling near the city of Cempoalla, which the great Spanish commander Cortez took possession of for the Spanish crown, Hildebrand says, full forty

years agone, and that it now has a settlement of white men. The land thereabouts is strangely rich and fertile, producing throughout the whole year an abundance of flowers and fruits; for, unlike unto us in England, they have no winter to check the growth of plants, and to ofttimes kill the tender flowers. The Indians who dwelt here were always a tender-natured people, my Hildebrand says, although they used formerly to offer men and women and children in sacrifice to their gods. This seems to me most difficult of belief, how gentle-hearted people should force themselves to such barbarities, but I am assured of it by my dear son, who ever speaks and has ever spoken nought but the truth to me. Here Friar Hildebrand liked well to make his abode, and here amongst the Indians he wrought a great work, for he baptized abundance of converts to the faith of Christ. He had erected outside of his dwelling a large cross of pure silver, a precious metal to be had quite commonly in that favoured land, which he adorned every morning with new flowers, deep red roses, and the golden stars of the twining jessamine, and under which he stood day by day

to preach the Gospel of Christ to listening crowds of the dark-hued Indians, as I mind me well he used to preach in the villages around our Abbaye of Tavystoke, long before. And his own life, so good, so gentle, so patient, so pure, preached ever, says my Hildebrand, still holier sermons to the people of Cempoalla. Also he went about among the sick, and did much good to many, raising many to health from their beds of languishing, and sat by the dying through the hot and weary nights of those regions, speaking peace unto the soul as it passed away to the eternal world. Surely I need not to be told how skilful the good friar ever was, as doctor and nurse, for did he not in my sore strait when my Walter was ill of fever, and not long before my little Hildebrand was born, take every care from me, and tend him like a woman, thoughtless of his own health, and even his own life?

All this happened to him abroad, while my Hildebrand worked at some silver mines at no great distance from this fair city of Cempoalla, and stored up for himself ample treasures, living much of his time with the dear friar, who never

ceased to be to him the father, the guardian, the counsellor, the friend, he promised us he would be to our adventurous boy. So the years passed away, until the month of May in the year 1549, when the dear friar sickened of a malady common to those parts, attended by much fever and pain, through all which he but increased more and more in patience and heavenly virtue. And, first of all, he entreated my Hildebrand to leave him and secure his own safety; but finding that he would not go (and sorry should I be to call him my son, had he done so), he accepted every attention rendered to him, as soothing balm unto his heart.

And no sooner had the Indians knowledge of his state, than they gathered around his dwelling, and offered many prayers before the silver cross, in the name of Christ our Saviour, for the recovery of their beloved priest and friend. But it was not the will of God that these their supplications should be of any avail; and as I read the diary of Friar Hildebrand, which has been so long laid by in his small iron box, and learn to know all that he has so bravely suffered for my sake, and for the upholding of purity and truth and the just main-

tenance of his solemn vows, I feel that it was God who saw that His servant had carried the iron cross on his breast, and that heavier cross in his heart, long enough, and exchanged both the one and the other for the golden crown of His glory.

So now, being very weary and ill, he lay on his couch in his garden, amongst the honeysuckles and roses, and the variegated convolvulus, and the gaudy hued parasite plants that creep up every great tree, while the mocking-bird and the scarlet cardinal, both of whose songs are very sweet, and the gaily plumaged parrots flew about, together with beauteous humming-birds and butterflies of every variety and shade of colour; all which dear Friar Hildebrand delighted to point out to my son, for he ever had an artist's eye, as he makes known unto us who read his diary, and unto all who ever listened to his eloquent words concerning God's beautiful world; as well as all who watched him, as I have done, in the far-away past, when I was but a very young maiden, and he was busy illuminating his missals and other manuscripts.

He lay upon his couch with flowers around him and in his hands on that May morning, and

handled first one and then the other as he told my Hildebrand the story of that May in Devonshire when his mother was made the Queen, all the particulars of which fair spring day, even to my words about the May dew, he had treasured up, dear heart, in his diary. A day it is, too, which I have ever remembered, for that my Walter first thought of loving me on that day. And then he told my Hildebrand many particulars concerning the Abbaye of Tavystoke, and added how that in a certain iron box of his would be found various entertaining manuscripts, written out by his own hand touching its foundation, copied from ancient parchments he had come upon in the said Abbaye. Then he added in a tone almost of humiliation, "And whoso opens that box, my dear Hildebrand, will likewise find in it my diary, and if thou openest it, start not at the confessions of its pages, Hildebrand; I am a man as well as a monk; the passions of humanity are not extinct, though they may be stifled, under a friar's gown; be not surprised, dear lad, if thou findest therein the records of a passionate love for thy sweet mother; let it not trouble thee, my son, she has

never known it, never guessed it, and unless—— ah! well, I leave it to thee, Hildebrand. If when thou returnest thou findest her alive, and seest well to let her likewise read the diary, be it so; the flowers will bloom then upon my grave, and if she but turns one tenderer thought unto me for the knowledge that cometh unto her heart so late, it will, methinks, make even Paradise more fair."

And then he drew out by a cord from his bosom a little curl of hair, and showed it to my son, and restored it to its place, while he bid him to bury it where it had lain so long. I mind me well how he got possession of that little curl, although I never guessed it did more than serve the turn he asked it for; he painted once a woman's hair while I stood by him in that cell of his in which he wrote and painted, and he said unto me, "Cicely, dear child, I want to match the colour of thy hair with my paints for the hair of this fair adye's head; wilt give me a stray lock?" and I most willingly consented, for that I was then somewhat proud of my abundance of light brown ringlets (they are fast silvering now), so he cut off one gravely and laid it on his easel. Alack-a-day!

he must thence have laid it on his heart and have had it travel thus with him, till it lies mouldering along with his gracious kindly form and handsome face close by the Indian city of Cempoalla. And then he showed to my Hildebrand a page of the missal he always used in his devotions, and which he took now from where it lay beside him on his couch, and pointed out to him on one of the pages a face that made my boy utter an exclamation of surprise, for he knew it at once as the face of his mother in her youth. "Hildebrand," said the dying friar, "that face haunts my vision waking and sleeping of late, as it did in the old Abbaye years ago beside the murmuring Tavy, and amongst the boughs of the old oak; and when I next see it, it will shine with heavenly brightness, and I shall never miss it again—never more pine, but to gaze upon it for one short hour, for it will be with me through all the blessed ages of eternity. If thou dost ever see her again, Hildebrand, tell this to thy mother; tell her that her image, like a star in the dark sky of night, shone upon my life and guided me and abode with me through all these years in Cempoalla, as it has done ever since

I first knew her in the beloved old Tavystoke. Tell her, too, that my love for her made me love and honour also thy most worthy father, Walter Hawley, who cherished towards me, as I to him, an honest regard and affection. Do not mourn me, my son, mourn not when the cross is lifted, and the crown set upon my brow; death comes as an angel of mercy, an ambassador of God, that opens for me the new, fair world of heaven, and brings me honours from my King. All my life I have loved the countless glories which our Father gives us in this world, and yet I know that, even going as I do from amidst all this magnificence and beauty," and thereupon he glanced around on the luxurious growth and gorgeous colouring of his Mexican home, "Heaven will burst upon my enraptured sight with such a wealth of loveliness that my soul will pause upon the very threshold to breathe its first rapturous breath, ere it dare proceed further within the pearly gates. The presence of God, of Christ, of the just men made perfect—think of it, Hildebrand, how this must glorify the beauty of all things."

So, with high and holy converse, the two talked

together in the garden till the evening drew nigh, when suddenly Friar Hildebrand, who had lain silent for a little space, and apparently exhausted, turned himself somewhat, and gazed upwards into the blaze of carmine and golden glory in the heavens above him.

"Cicely," he murmured softly, "love is stronger than death;" and then he turned again to my Hildebrand with a smile of unutterable and playful sweetness, as if he guessed he had heard these words. Whereat my boy pressed dear Friar Hildebrand's hands, and smiled likewise, though the fast-falling tears coursed each other down his cheeks. The dear saint, now too weak to speak, pointed upwards again, and so lay for many minutes. Suddenly he cried in a loud, distinct voice—"My blessed Saviour Christ! Behold! my crown!" and so died. Then the sun sank suddenly behind the hills, and darkness shrouded the beautiful garden, and the gentle face of dear Friar Hildebrand, now pale in death.

My son buried him amongst the lovely flowers, and under the luxuriant trees of that garden, with the curl of hair upon his breast, and the missal,

open at the picture, beside him in the coffin; and many of the Indians came to the funeral obsequies, which were performed by a priest who lived not far distant; and they helped to chant requiems for the dear soul that had departed, and masses were said to free him from purgatory. But my Hildebrand thinks, and I think so too, that his soul was cleansed here below by his faith in Christ, and that he showed this, by his patiently borne trials; and also that he lived too near heaven for his soul to tarry in its homeward flight. *Requiescat in pace.*

As for the Abbaye of Tavystoke, with all its lands and belongings, it has been these many years past in the hands of the Russells, to whom the king, Henry VIII., gave it—a family of much honour and repute, whereof the chief member is the Duke of Bedford. But for the town itself, the destruction of the Abbaye, as an abode of religious men, has brought much present impoverishment and decay—the schools, and the printing press, and many another good thing to which the monks gave diligent heed, have almost come to nought through neglect, and suffer by any comparison

with that flourishing state in which they existed in the days of the dear Friar Hildebrand; but my husband thought all would be prosperous again when the state of religion was once more settled, and my Walter knew most things. I could say much more respecting the adventures of my dear son Hildebrand, who even now contents not himself at Tavystoke, but sails again shortly for the new world of America; and of his great riches which he has attained unto by the honest labour of his own hands, and no small share of which he has bestowed upon me, so that to my great joy I shall be able largely to help the poor and sick with this his bounty. But my Hildebrand bids me to refrain from adding hereto, this being but a record touching that holy man of God, Friar Hildebrand, which serves to explain what was his after-life, when he parted from us to go beyond the seas. This his whole history is to my mind of so beautiful and touching a nature, that I am minded it shall, after I am dead and gone, descend unto my dear children and grandchildren, to instruct them how to live as in the fear of God by conquering self and making others happy, by bearing the iron

cross and walking steadfastly towards the golden crown.

But for the present, because of the tender nature of the love he bore to me, the which I was so unworthy of, as well as of that affectionate heart of my dear husband, Walter Hawley, which turned to me so many years ago, and which I rested in without a doubt or misgiving ever after; because of this I am minded, and my dear son Hildebrand agrees to my request, that he should keep the secret he has had entrusted unto him, and not reveal aught till my body rests beside my dearly loved husband and my two children in the churchyard of the old Abbaye.

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THE END.

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